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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE

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# A HISTORY OF ENGLISH FURNITURE

BY PERCY MACQUOID, R.I.

With Plates in Colour after Shirley Slocombe,  
and numerous Illustrations selected and  
arranged by the Author

THE AGE OF SATINWOOD



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## CHAPTER I



IT has been shown in 'The Age of Walnut' that the appreciation of lacquer furniture developed in this country soon after the Restoration, and that a great deal was made here during the reigns of William and Anne. This taste continued during the first half of the eighteenth century, and although large importations were made from Holland during the earlier period, it is improbable that Dutch lacquer was much in favour after 1725, as many books written on the subject by English authors show that this craft was firmly established here by that date. Chippendale states that many of his designs are suitable for lacquer decoration, but gives no details or directions for its use. The strong interest in Chinese art that arose about 1750, shown in mahogany furniture, wall-papers, and gilt mirrors, strengthened the demand for lacquer furniture; the same designs and processes were employed as before, but the shapes generally conformed to those of contemporary mahogany. The ornament grew smaller in detail, and no longer boldly raised as in the earlier work; the employment of different colours in the patterns was generally omitted, the selection being confined to gold upon a black, red, bistre, or green ground; of these black was by far the most favoured, red was rarely employed on account of its violent and distinct colour, and green considered undesirable on account of the great difficulty in preserving a brilliant and permanent hue.

Bedrooms were furnished throughout with lacquer, wall-papers, mirrors, and chintzes in Chinese taste. The bedroom at Badminton, given a little later, is a good example of this fashion that appealed so strongly to the delicate and frivolous taste of the wealthier classes; a taste that had been influenced by pseudo-Chinese-French work, and the

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furniture of Simon Martin, who discovered his celebrated varnish about 1730, and whose decorations on furniture were at that time often oriental. The publication in England of various books on the subject, and reprints from those published earlier in the century, had no doubt helped to keep up the interest taken in lacquer. The following extracts are taken from a small work entitled *The Arts Masterpiece, or A Companion for the Ingenious of Either Sex*, 1700 :—

‘THE CURIOUS ART AND MYSTERY OF JAPPANING.—To be proficient in this Art several matters are required, and these you must consider as suitable, not only in property but goodness, that your cost and labour may not prove in vain.’

After this rather vague statement, the author gives recipes for different varnishes, but the methods of producing the various coloured lacquers are founded more or less upon the first edition of Stalker and Parker, 1681, mentioned in the ‘Age of Walnut.’ The most important of these recipes is seedlac varnish, the substance, with which colour was mixed, to form a lacquer ground.

‘SEEDLAC VARNISH, HOW TO MAKE IT.—Your Groundwork is good rectified Spirits—of which you may take a Gallon, put it into as wide a necked Bottle as you can get, that the Gums may the better come out. Then of the best seedlac add a pound and a half, let it macerate twenty-four hours, or till the Gums are well dissolved, with often shaking to keep them from clogging together. Then with Flanel strainers strain it into a Tin Tunnel placed in the mouth of the empty Bottle. Then let the Varnish settle and pour it off into other Bottles till it rises thick and no longer thin. Then strain the thick part and settle that again and keep the fine Varnish for your use, and this does as well without the danger of attempting to boil it which endangers firing the house and the Party’s life.’

A recipe for red lacquer, a few pages further on, showing the gradual care taken in producing a fine ground, may be interesting to those who wish to restore or relacquer old furniture according to the original method :—

‘RED JAPAN, AND HOW TO MAKE IT.—The Reds are properly three, viz. The Common Red, the Deep Dark Red, and the light pale Red. In the first Vermillion is proper mixed with the thickest of seedlac. Warm the work and mix your Vermillion with the Varnish in a Medium, carry it over four times, permitting it to dry as the

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former; and if your Reds be in a good body and full, Rush it smooth then with ordinary Seedlac Varnish, wash eight times and after 12 hours Rush it again; and then for a curious outward covering give it eight or ten washes with Seedlac Varnish, and after five days polish it with water, Lampblack, and Tripoly.'

Regarding this Tripoly there are the following directions :—

'It ought to be made into subtil powder and sifted, it is to polish your work after it is Varnished, and may be had at the Ironmongers in Foster Lane.'

Another book of the same date is *Poly Graphice, or The Arts of Drawing, Engraving, Etching, Limning, Painting, Vernishing, Japanning, and Gilding*, by William Salmon, M.D., MDCCI. At the end of the recipes is this sensible advice :—

'These things have we given you for Example sake and thought good to make the Exempla in that of flowers as being that in which the greatest Nicety and Difficulty lyes, it not being so easily performed as other things; and yet in this very thing the Licentia Picturalis is very large, the Artist being left chiefly to his fancy, only with this caution that everywhere he uses variety.'

It was upon these black, blue, red, and yellow lacquer grounds that the time and care was bestowed. When they were polished and hard, oriental designs in gold, bronze, silver, and colour were painted upon the finished surface. The art of lacquering in 1740 was still regarded as a polite occupation, for in the descriptive catalogue of the contents of Strawberry Hill, written by Sir Horace Walpole, he mentions a cabinet japanned by Lady Walpole, and also alludes to this fashion, in a letter to Sir Horace Maun, dated August 1743, 'My table I like, though he has stuck in among the ornaments two vile china jars that look like the modern japanning by ladies.'

In the preface to the extracts from the MSS. of the great Mr. Boyle, published 1735, entitled *A New and Curious Method of Japanning upon Wood*, the following remarks show that this amateur lacquering was resented by the professional craftsman :—

'If any person should find a difficulty in the Performance of any article, I shall be ready to put them to rights for a reasonable satisfaction. I must confess I owe my knowledge of several valuable Receipts to some Manuscripts of the Great Mr. Boyle



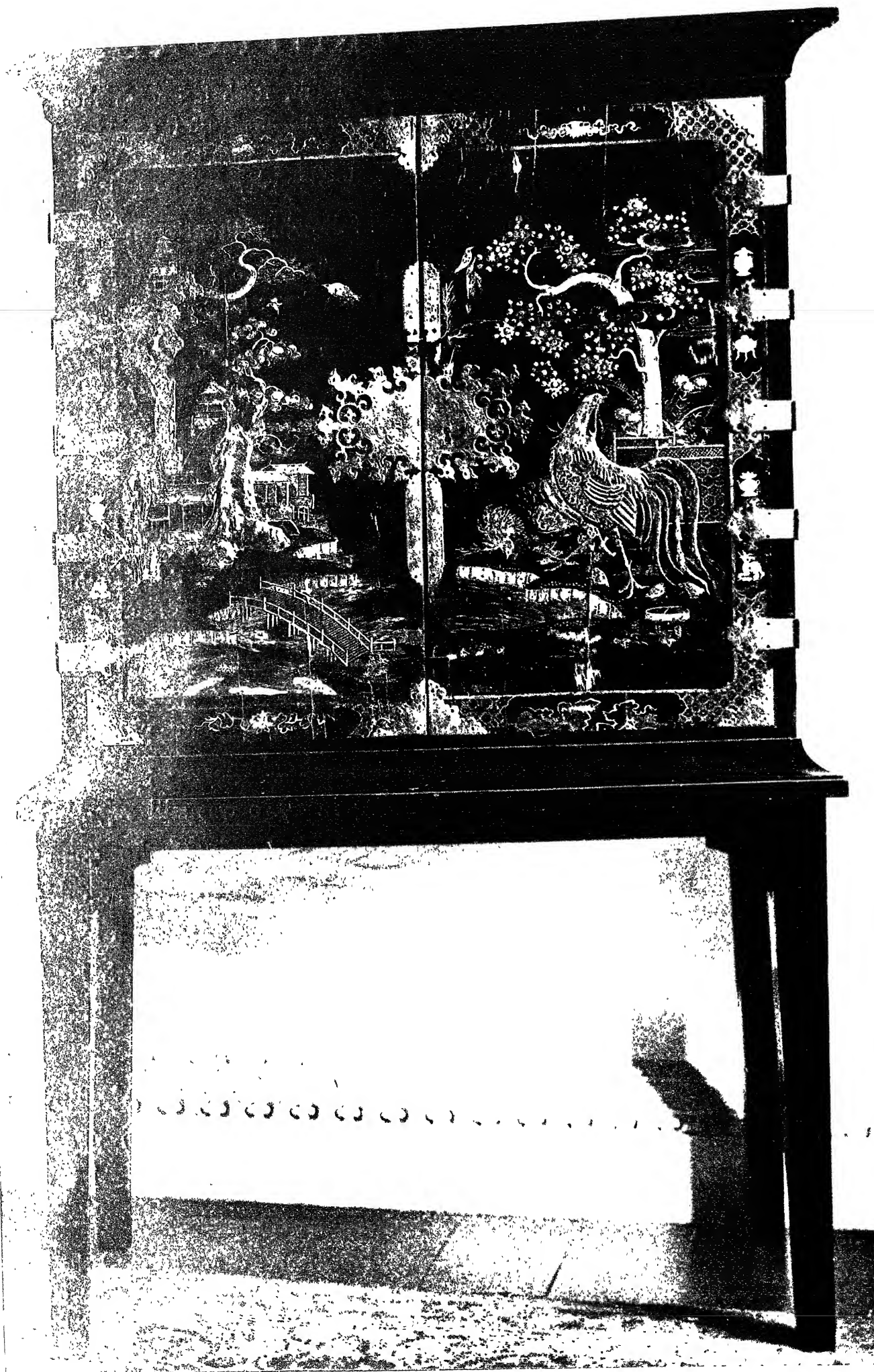


FIG. 1.—BLACK LACQUER CABINET. Property of Viscount ENFIELD.

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which have never been printed, and have fallen into my hands by means of the same noble Lord his relation whom I before mentioned in my Art of Drawing. I have been upbraided by some workmen in Curiosities for publishing Receipts of value to instruct the Gentry in the manner of Drawing and Painting and in Arts of the like kind, for they say it is a Damage to the workmen who get their livelihood by such things. I have a short Answer to this Argument, namely that there are none of the Receipts which I publish, but which are either my own invention or I have bought at a good Price, or else have been presented with by People of Fashion with their Desire to have them made publick ; and these are such as would never come to the knowledge of the Workmen if I was not to communicate them in this manner. So that I can say from my own certain knowledge that many of them are obliged to me, and instead of complaining ought to thank me.'

In spite of this protest, the recipes that follow are practically repetitions of Stalker and Parker and other early authors on the subject, showing that the new enthusiasm in the art of lacquering had produced no discoveries. Many of these recipes of the great Mr. Boyle leave much to be desired ; the following is somewhat vague :—

'Take any colour you have a mind to and grind it well with water with a stone and Muller, then let it dry and grind it in a Mortar and sift it if there is occasion, then instead of oil mix it with White Varnish, and paint it with what you think proper.'

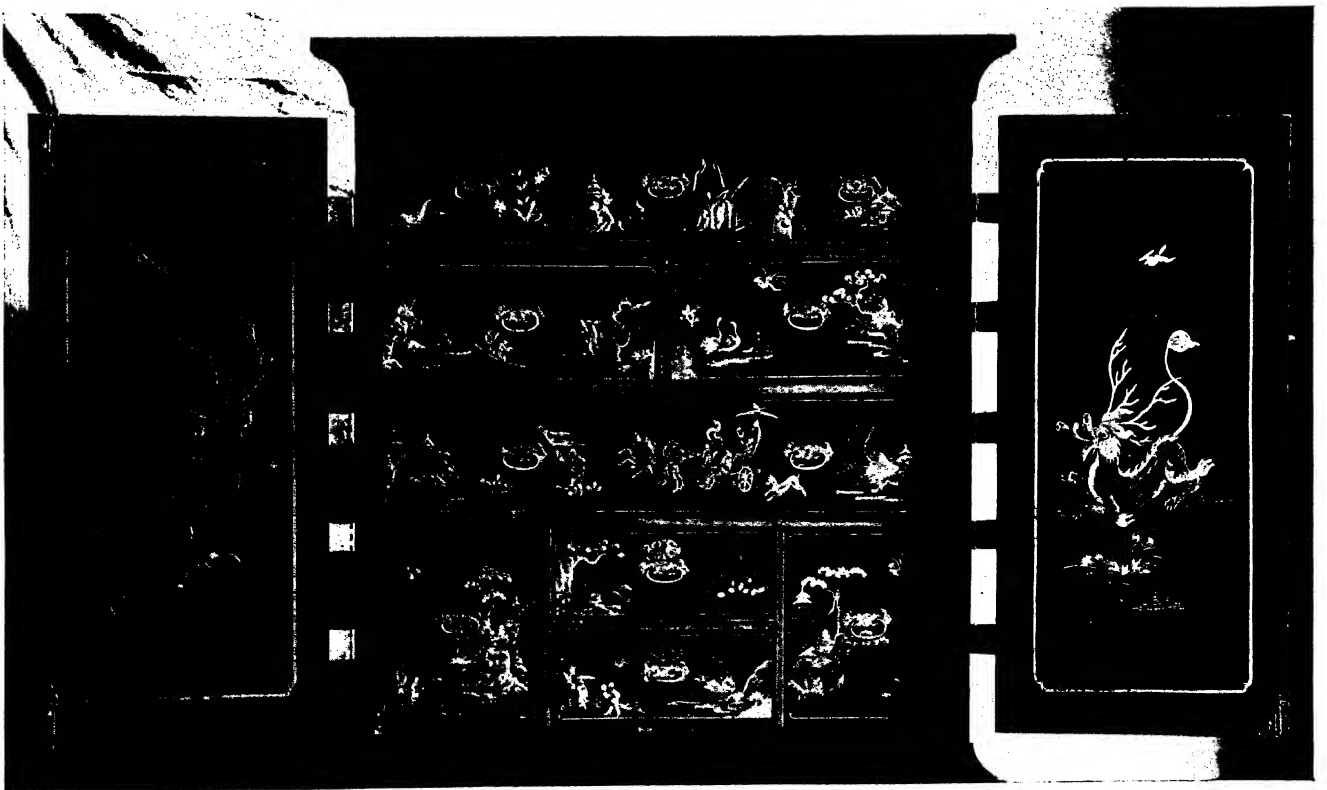


FIG. 2.—THE SAME, OPEN.

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In 1754 Edwards and Darly published a book of designs for use upon lacquered furniture that gave that art a more substantial help, and five years later a series of drawings for the same purpose was produced by Decker, a plagiarism on the former work, but with the following title: *Chinese Architecture, Civil and Ornamental, being a Large Collection of the designs of Plans and Elevations from the Imperial Retreat to the smallest ornamental Building in China, from real designs drawn in China adapted to this climate.*

Soon after 1760, it appears that lacquer became less popular, for in the *Handmaid to the Arts*, by Robert Dossie, published 1764, he alludes to a decline in the fashion for this furniture :—

‘By Japanning is to be here understood the Art of covering bodies by grounds of opake colours in varnish, which may be either afterwards decorated by paintings or gilding or left in a plain state. This is not at present practised so frequently on chairs, tables, and other furniture of houses, except tea-waiters, as formerly, but the introduction of it for ornamenting coaches, snuff-boxes, and skreens in which there is a rivalry betwixt ourselves and the French, renders the cultivation and propagation of this Art of great importance to commerce.’

The above extracts show the great interest taken in this lacquer manufacture ; further reference to the above-quoted works will give much that is interesting and instructive.

It may be useful to mention some of the characteristics that distinguish English, Dutch, and Oriental lacquer. The ground of the Chinese and Japanese manufacture is invariably smoother, and the enamel more brilliant than that of European origin ; the execution of the landscapes, figures, and other details is sharper and more rapid, and the work is but little in relief ; the faces are more truly oriental and drawn with a finer line, and the gold throughout is brilliant. The hinges, corner-pieces, lock-plates, and handles, if oriental, are more flimsy and less deeply incised than those of European make, and the doors and drawers are not of oak, unless the cabinet had been sent to the East for decoration, after being manufactured here. Lacquered panels for doors and drawer fronts, ready to be made

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FIG. 3.—TOP OF LACQUER TABLE. Width, 4 feet. Property of MRS. ASSHETON SMITH.

up into cabinets in Europe, were also imported from China and Japan ; the difference between the painting of the framework and the panels in these cases is clearly discernible. The distinction between the Dutch and English lacquer is more difficult to follow, but the structure is here a very certain guide, for in foreign pieces the internal joinery is coarse

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and the dovetailing large. The figures and birds of the ornamentation are also rather better drawn, and the relief is not quite so high as in English specimens. After 1725 the Dutch importations of lacquer into this country considerably diminished, and by the middle of the century the patronage of this industry was almost entirely confined to objects of home production and those of Eastern origin.

In the cabinet (fig. 1), of about the date 1714, the raised ornament of the previous thirty years is still maintained, although somewhat lower in relief. The doors are mounted in the usual manner with elaborate brass fittings, the lock-plates are still cock-headed, a traditional pattern dating from the sixteenth century, and the large lacquered birds have become smaller in treatment, and lack the additional colouring to their plumage. The inside of the cabinet (fig. 2) consists of the usual series of drawers, lacquered with Chinese scenery and figures of very careful execution, in distinct English drawing. A good many small tables for cards and tea were made both in red and black lacquer, but it is rare to find a table as large as fig. 3, which is twelve-sided, and of about the date 1725. The edges are dished and rounded, the top is decorated with a bold design of cocks and hens, amidst flowering plants radiating to the centre; the lacquer is in high relief, most careful in execution, and its colour is black and gold; this top is supported on a central shaft, finishing in three curved legs, which are ornamented with pendants of peg-top form.

Another cabinet of very high quality, and of about 1745, is shown in fig. 4. This, with its original stand, is 'the light pale red' lacquer described in the *Arts Masterpiece*. The decoration, which is delicate, consists of birds and plants in almost flat relief. The red stand is in true oriental character, being a deliberate copy of a Chinese rosewood table, and is most carefully decorated with gold and silver. A pair of tables very similar to this stand exist at Osterley; fig. 5 represents one of these. The top is surrounded by a fretwork gallery as a protection to

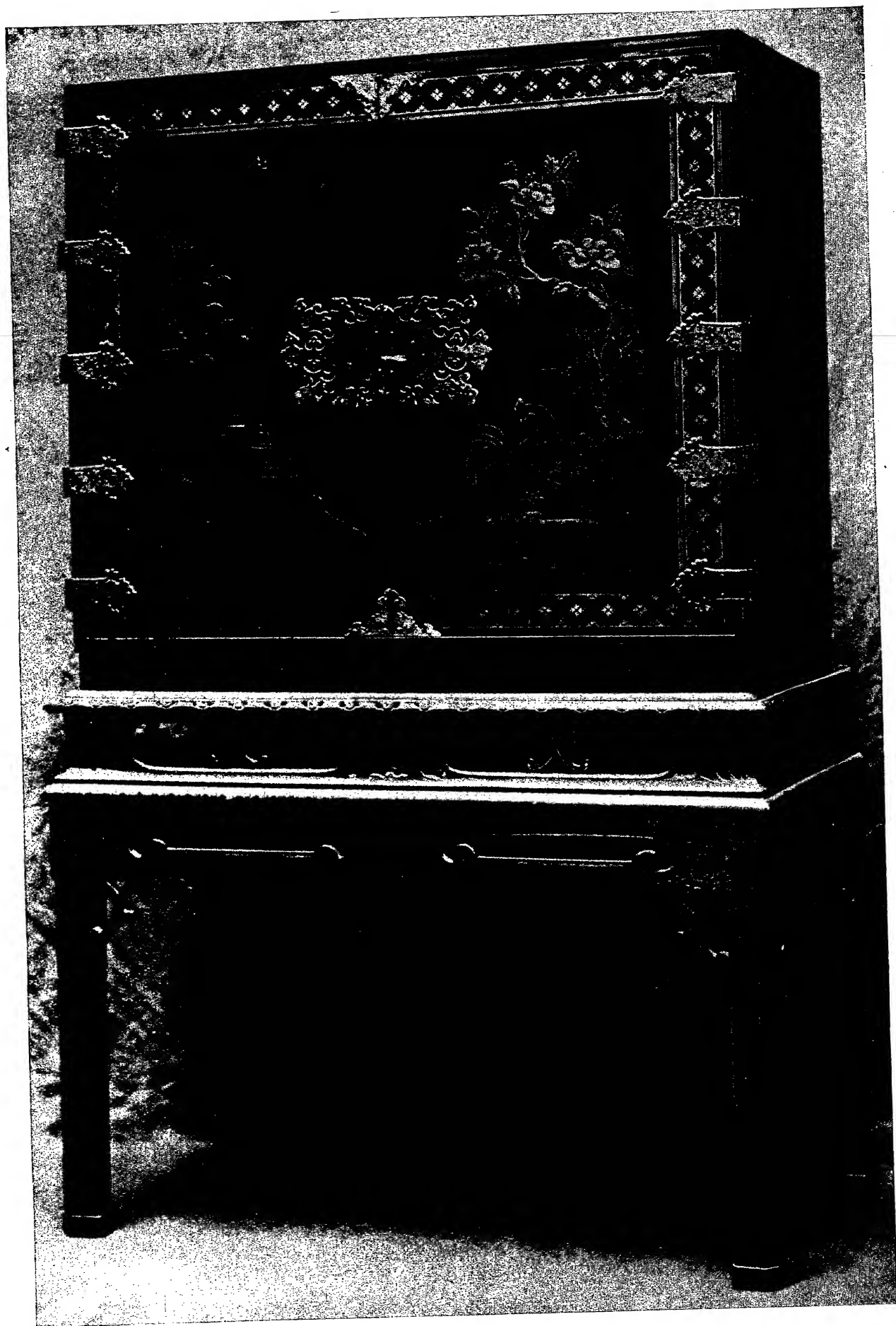


FIG. 4.—RED LACQUER CABINET. Height, 5 feet 9 inches ; width, 3 feet.



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china, the colour of the lacquer being black and gold; in both stand and table it can be noticed that a Chinese treatment of the ball and claw foot has been adopted. Another specimen of red lacquer, of about 1740, is shown in Plate 1., a corner cupboard in two compartments, united by a centre drawer. The red ground in this instance does not possess the coral-hued delicacy of the lighter variety, and is termed in the recipes of the time 'The Common Red.' The upper panels represent Chinese family scenes in brown, black, and gold lacquer; both the top and bottom panels are bordered with a scrolled Georgian decoration, and the cupboard is headed with a curved



FIG. 5.—BLACK LACQUER TABLE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

PLATE I (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

RED LACQUER CABINET

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

WIDTH, 3 " 7 "

DEPTH, 1 FOOT 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  "

PROPERTY OF

H. PERCY DEAN, Esq.









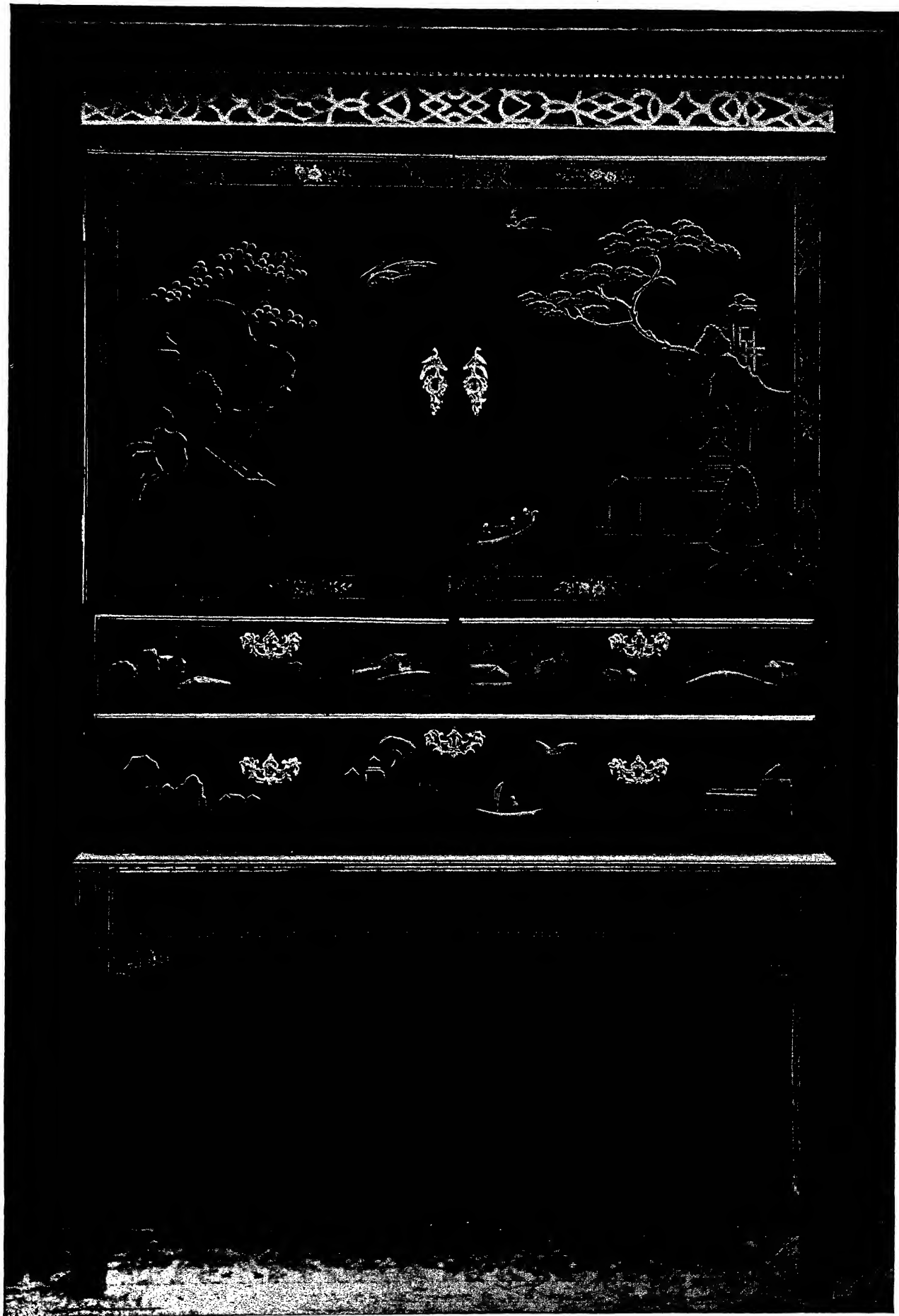


FIG. 6.—BLACK LACQUER CABINET AND STAND. Height, 7 feet; length, 4 feet  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches; depth, 1 foot 10 inches. Property of MESSRS. MORANT.

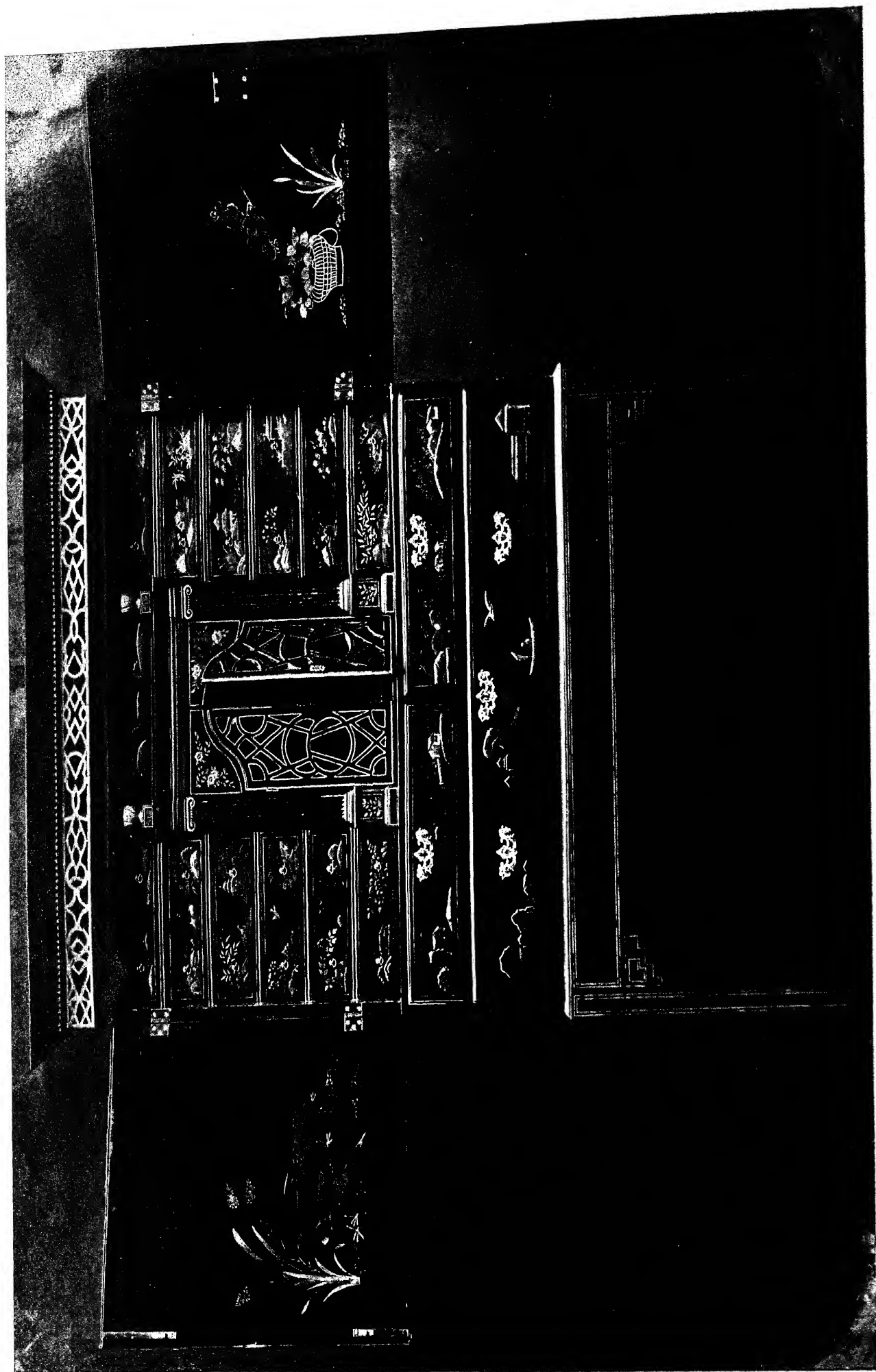


FIG. 7.—THE SAME, OPEN.

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pediment of traditional shape. In the cabinet of about 1755 (fig. 6), a marked difference to the preceding specimens can be observed, for a frieze and cornice are added which conform to the pattern of contemporary mahogany furniture; the decoration is small in character, with but little trace of real Chinese feeling; the metal-work handles and lock-plates resemble those found on chests of drawers of the time, and the construction of cabinet doors over a double tier of drawers is a novelty. The stand, though original, is on very simple lines, and a useful pattern for reproduction. Fig. 7 shows the inside, the centre being treated as a classical portico, enclosing two gates fretted in the Chinese taste, with a looking-glass background; the colour of the piece is black, a very little red being introduced here and there amidst the gold ornamentation.

The decoration of bedrooms in this style has been so often alluded to, that it will be interesting to give the complete furniture of one of these rooms as it still exists at Badminton. The walls are hung with a paper made in China, on which bamboos are depicted the full height of the room; these are interspersed with camelias, jonquils, and other flowers, amidst which fly pheasants and other birds all in brilliant colours; on the walls hang gilt looking-glasses of delicate design and fine execution in the Chinese Chippendale taste. The most elaborate of these is shown in fig. 8. The outside lines are of fantastic shape, enclosing glass compartments divided by carved framings; in the centre is a projecting canopy approached by a double flight of steps and a rococo balustrade; the canopy is supported by six slender columns of eccentric but graceful design, and above it sits a grotesque Chinese figure wearing a pagoda-shaped hat; a pagoda roof hung with two bells completes this elaborate structure. The whole of the carving is most delicate and graceful and possesses its original gilding.

Fig. 9 represents the bed. The canopy, which is of wood, decorated in black and gold lacquer, rises rapidly in pagoda form, terminating at its

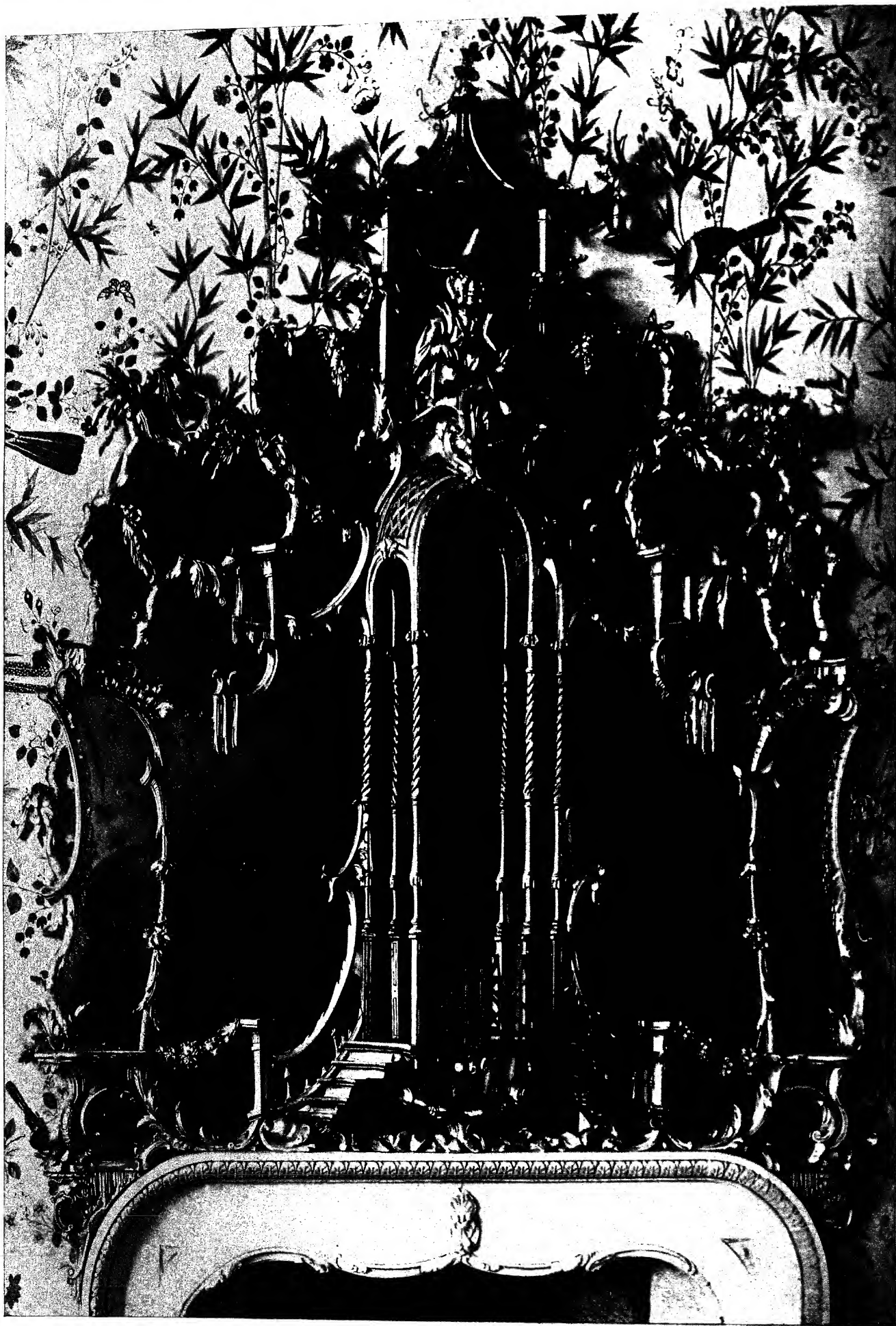


FIG. 8.—GILT MIRROR ON CHINESE WALL-PAPER. Height, 6 feet 6 inches ; width, 6 feet.  
Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.



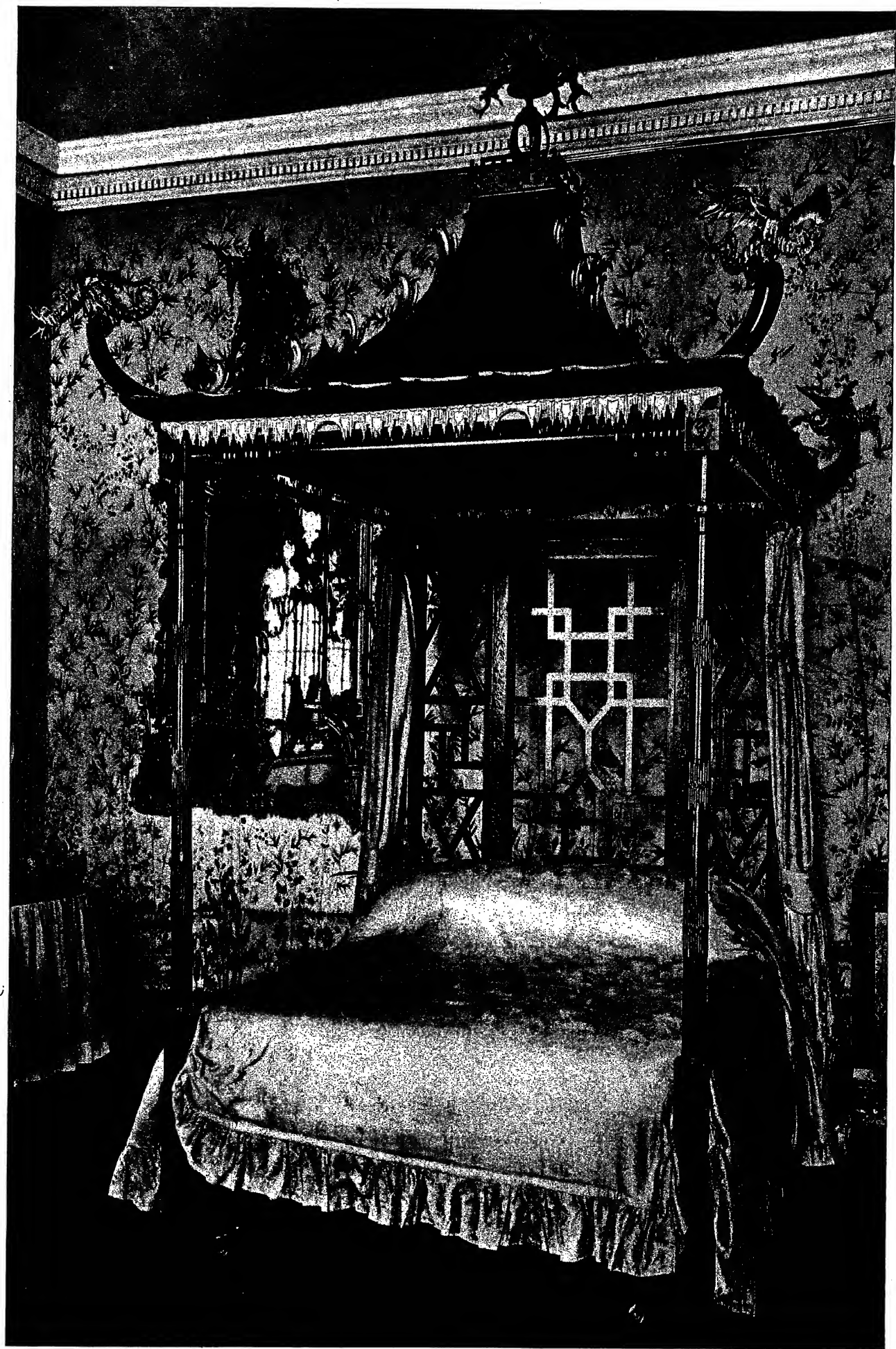


FIG. 9.—BLACK LACQUER BED. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.



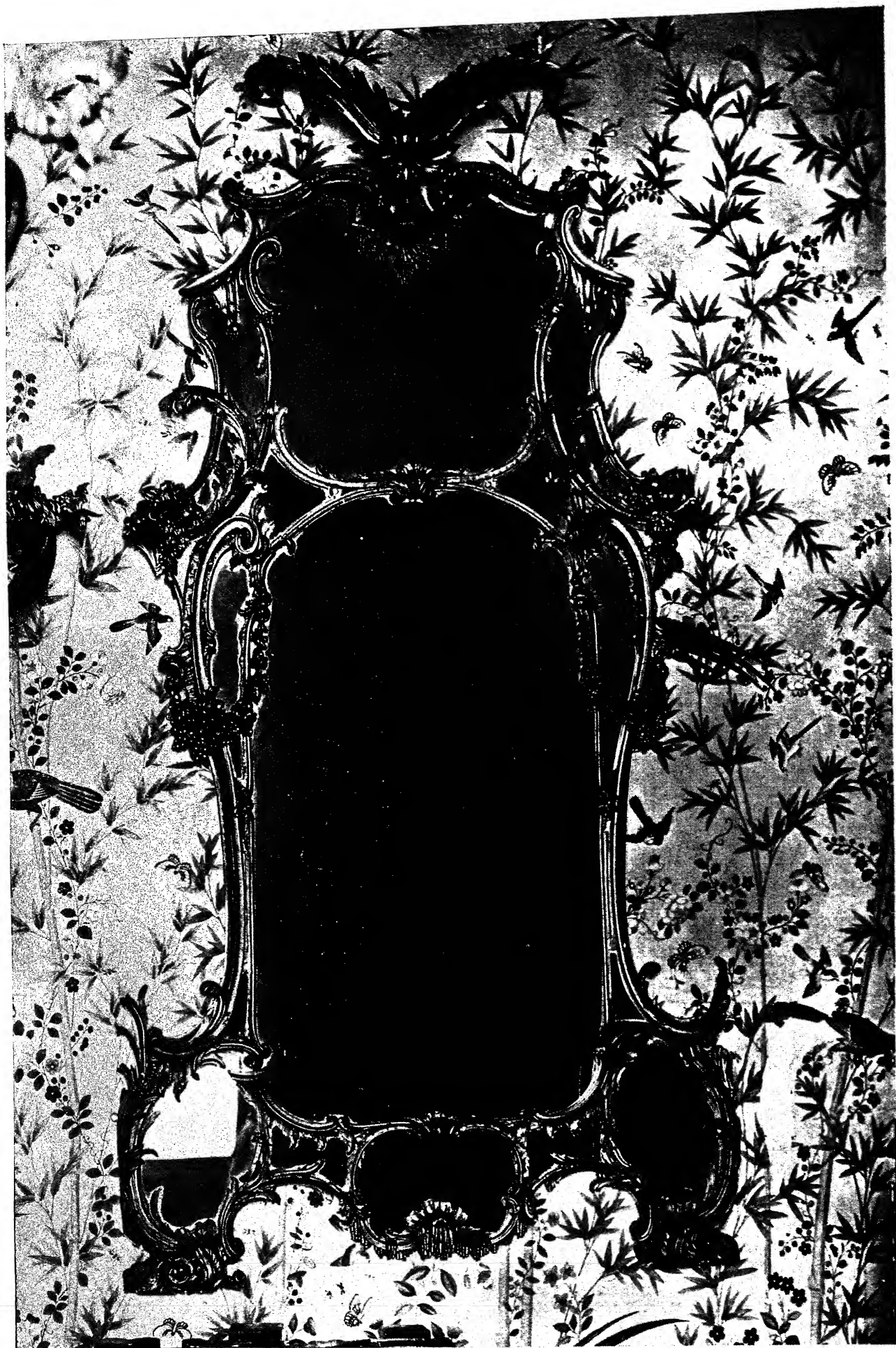


FIG. 10.—GILT MIRROR ON CHINESE WALL-PAPER. Height, 10 feet ; width, 4 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

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apex in a Chinese railing surmounted by a fantastic ornament ; at the four corners, finials scrolling upwards in pure Chinese taste, support gilded dragons, carved with great spirit and character ; the tester is tile-edged in the manner of all pagoda roofs, and the cornice is of the icicle pattern so frequently seen on mirrors of later Chippendale work ; the back is a bold open lattice contained in a lacquered framing, originally no doubt backed by chintz. The posts are simple, in order to display their lacquered decoration. The original curtains and valances are missing, but were probably of fine oriental chintz. To the right and left of this lacquer bed are mirrors, and fig. 10 is one of these. The dressing-table (fig. 11) is of knee-hole shape, the opening having four drawers behind cupboard doors ; the front, sides, and top are closely decorated with a lacquer-work of rocks and trees, no figures, birds, or animals being introduced into the design. On this dressing-table once stood a silver toilet service, decorated in Chinese taste ; it bears a hall-mark of 1685, and may have belonged to an earlier room in this style, for there are seventeenth-century Chinese papers and lacquer furniture in the adjoining apartments. Three pieces of this toilet service are shown in fig. 12.

The chairs (fig. 13) that accompany the bed are of Chinese lattice-work of simple geometrical design, and lacquered in black and gold ; the cresting is of pagoda outline, and the return sides to all the lattice-work are painted red, an addition which gives great relief to this furniture. In the example (fig. 14), of about 1758, a pagoda motive pervades the entire back, even the corners of the uprights are carved in this manner, and the entire surface is lacquered in black and gold ; the eagle headings to the latter are seldom found on a chair of so late a date.

The four little china-cases in black and gold lacquer, one of which is given in fig. 15, are also from Badminton. A pagoda roof hung with four bells is supported on two delicate twisted columns, and with a lattice-work balustrade forms the top compartment ; the sides of the centre division are solid, but applied with a Chinese fret, whilst those of the

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lower compartment are of open work. These china-cases formed part of the same set as the commode chest of drawers (fig. 16), another rare and highly finished piece of lacquer. Here the top is of undulating shape, backed by a gallery of Chinese railing; the front is divided into three compartments of drawers lacquered with landscapes, buildings, and figures, the side drawers being enclosed behind lattice-work doors, which give great variety to the surface; the handles are of the goffered type found upon mahogany furniture of about 1760. On the straight legs of the stand a herring-boning of lacquer is introduced that can also be noticed on the legs of the china-case (fig. 15). The returns of the lattice-work in these pieces are painted red, and correspond to the chairs of this interest-



FIG. 11.—BLACK LACQUER DRESSING-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 9 inches; length, 4 feet 2 inches; depth, 2 feet 6 inches. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

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ing set. That Chinese taste in the decoration of bedrooms was not confined to important houses is shown by a description in the *Connoisseur* of April 25, 1755, of a fashionable 'spark's' apartments :—

'Having occasion one morning to wait on a very pretty fellow, I was desired by the *valet de chambre* to walk into the dressing-room, as his master was not stirring. I was accordingly shown into a neat little chamber hung round with Indian paper and adorned with several little images of pagods and bramins, and vessels of Chelsea China, in which were set various coloured sprigs of artificial flowers. But the toilette most excited my admiration ; where I found everything was intended to be agreeable to the Chinese taste. A looking-glass, enclosed in a whimsical frame of Chinese paling, stood upon a japan table over which was spread a coverlid of the finest chintz.'

Another example of lacquered bedroom furniture can be seen in



FIG. 12.—PART OF SILVER TOILET-SERVICE. Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

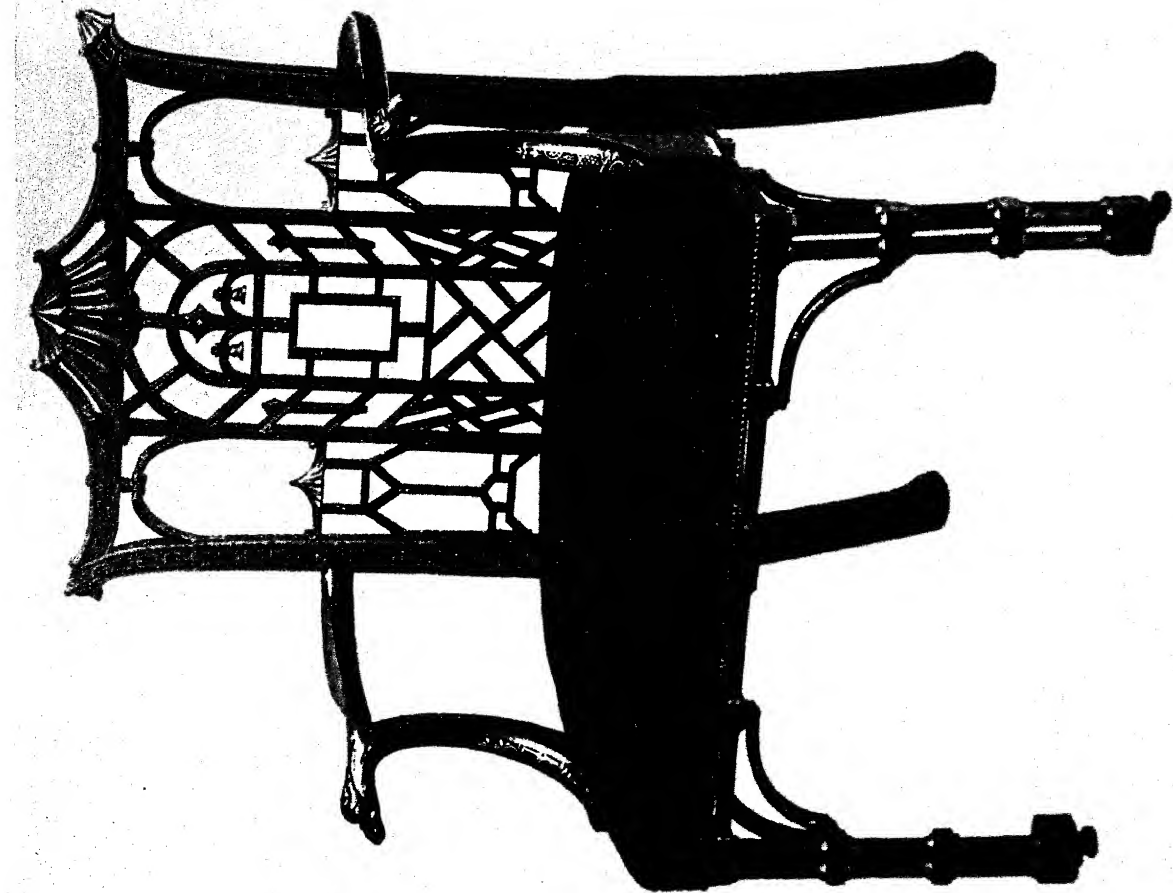


FIG. 14.—BLACK LACQUER CHAIR.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SONS.

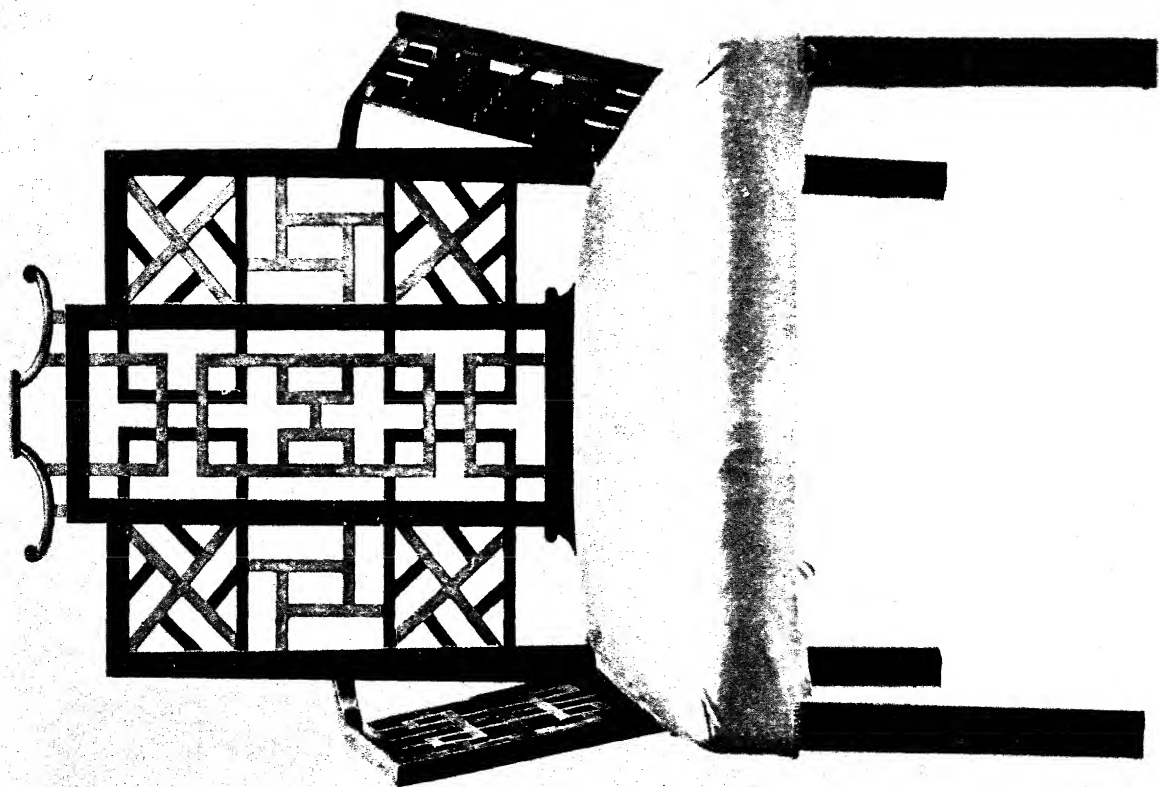


FIG. 13.—BLACK LACQUER CHAIR.  
Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.



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the clothes chest from Blenheim (fig. 17), of about the same date. The gold lacquer, representing islands covered with trees, rocks, and buildings, is almost flat in relief but extremely careful, the black ground being particularly brilliant and smooth. The design very clearly shows the disconnected attempt at irregular composition generally apparent in the late English adaptations of oriental drawing; each detail is so isolated that the charming irregularity of balance found on earlier specimens is lost. The spindle-shaped ornaments introduced on the border are of no definite style, and infer that lacquer was losing its true oriental character.

Many tables, screens, and chairs of this flat lacquer were made. Fig. 18 is a chair of a set from Houghton, in which the old hoop shape of the panelled back is preserved, although the legs conform to the straight type of 1760. Another instance of highly finished flat lacquer is shown in fig. 19, forming part of a set of three china-cabinets, probably made by Ince and Mayhew, as the design occurs in their book published 1768. The construction is of mahogany, lacquered in black and gold;

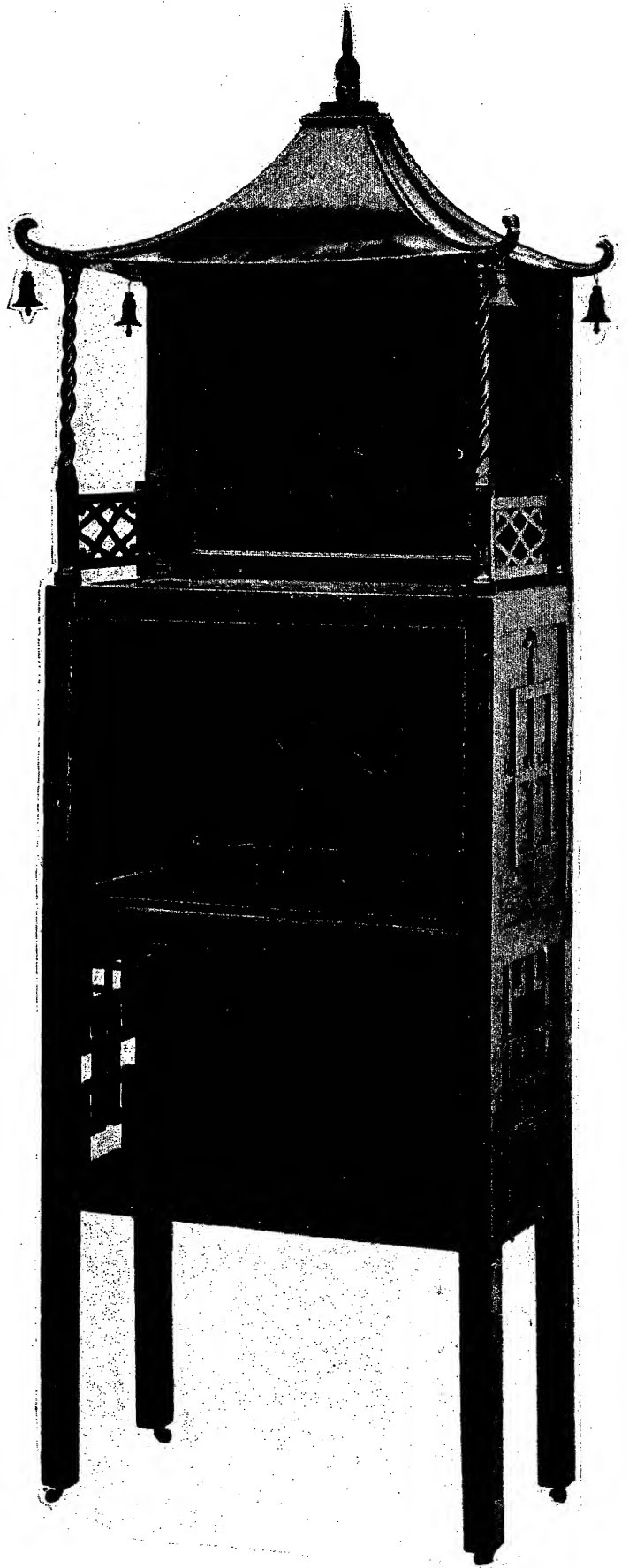


FIG. 15.—BLACK LACQUER CHINA-CASE.

Height, 4 feet 2 inches; width, 1 foot 8 inches;  
depth, 10 inches.

Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

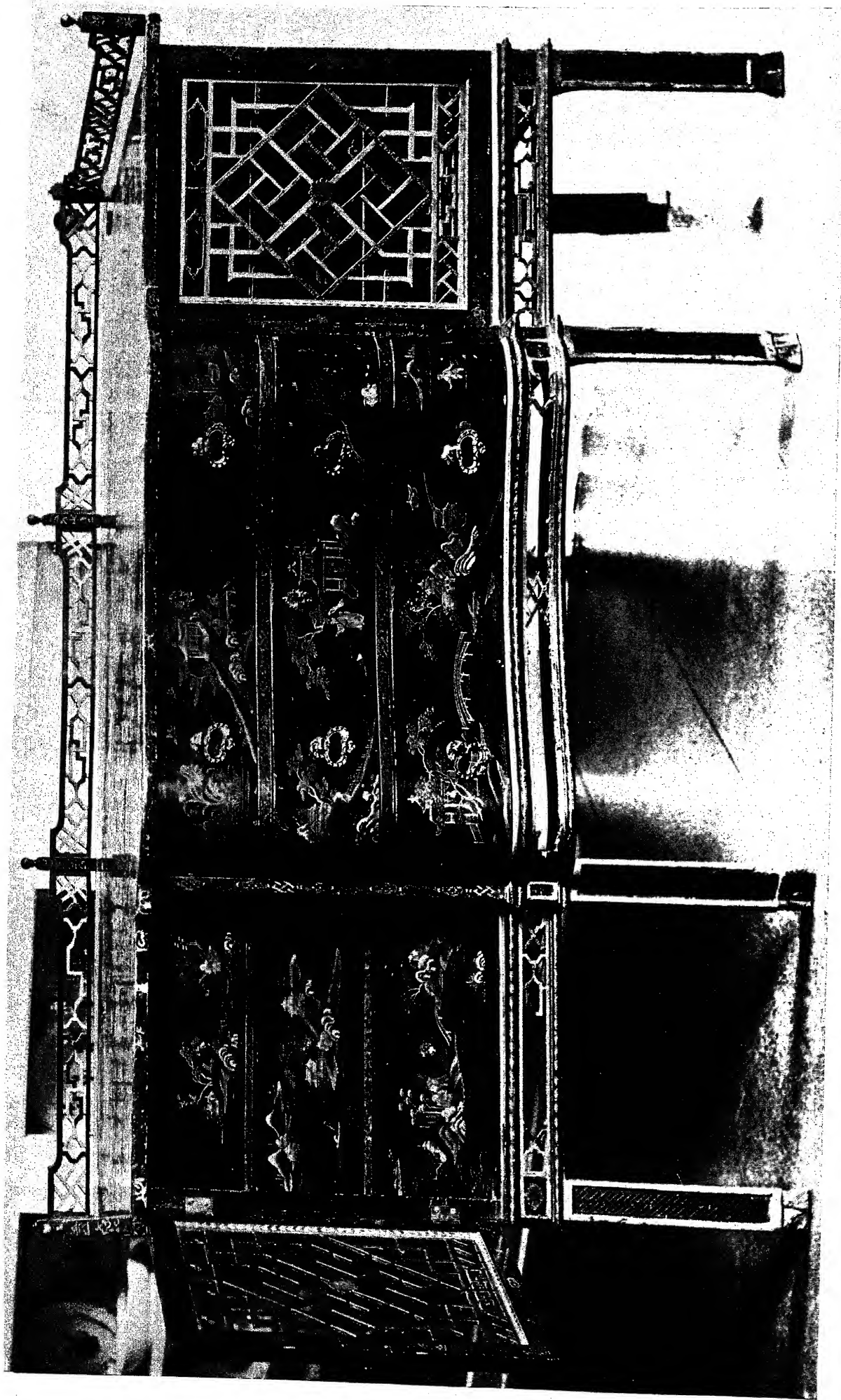


FIG. 16.—BLACK LACQUER COMMODO CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 2 feet 10 inches; length, 4 feet 8 inches. Property of the DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

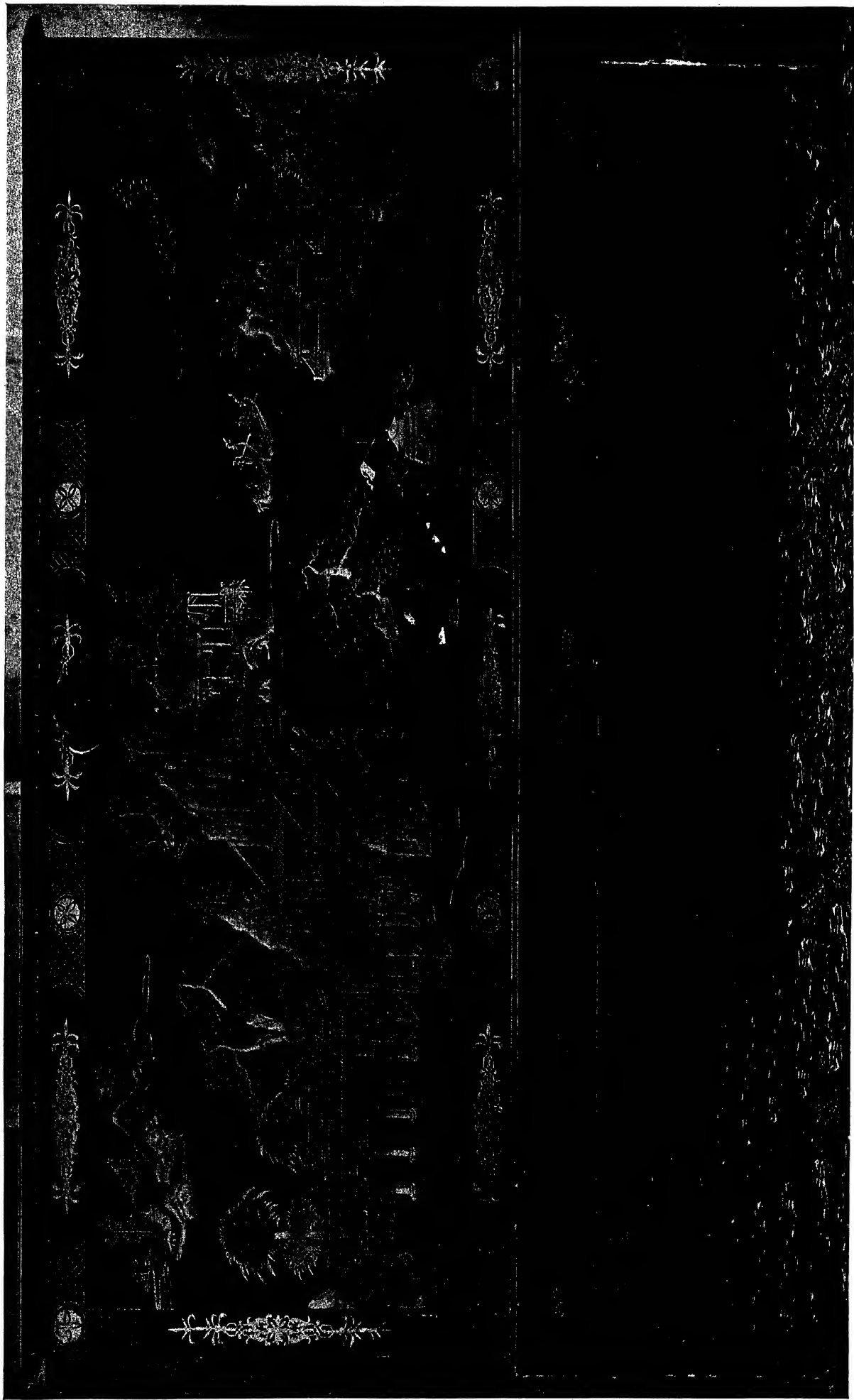


FIG. 17.—BLACK LACQUER CLOTHES-CHEST. Height, 3 feet 2 inches; length, 4 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.



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the gallery and cresting is a fine Chinese railing gilt, centring in a fretwork pagoda surmounting an arch of Gothic tracery ; below this is a china-case opening in two glazed doors, the framing decorated with small and finely painted panels of flat lacquer. The divisions to the glazing are gilt, and the base of the cabinet and the top of the stand open in drawers faced with a gilt card-cutting on a black ground, framed in fine lacquer-work borders ; the legs, straight and slight, are covered

with a small design of trees, rocks, and plants, and present a highly finished and delicate appearance. Fig. 20 is the corner cupboard that completes this set ; the design on the framing is scattered and disconnected as in all cases of this late lacquer, but the composition of the picture on the lower cupboard is rather better than generally found at this time, and the dainty execution of the three pieces in a great measure atones for the want of picturesque originality found in the earlier lacquer.

The State bedrooms at Nostell Priory are other fine examples of Chinese decoration and exceedingly interesting. Their date is a few years later than the room at Badminton already described. The walls are hung with a Chinese paper of rose-coloured and white peonies, chrysanthemums, irises, and tropical birds on a pale-green ground. The furniture to this room is of pea-green lacquer decorated with gold and silver designs. Lacquered furniture made under the direction of the brothers Adam



FIG. 18.—BLACK LACQUER CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet 9 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

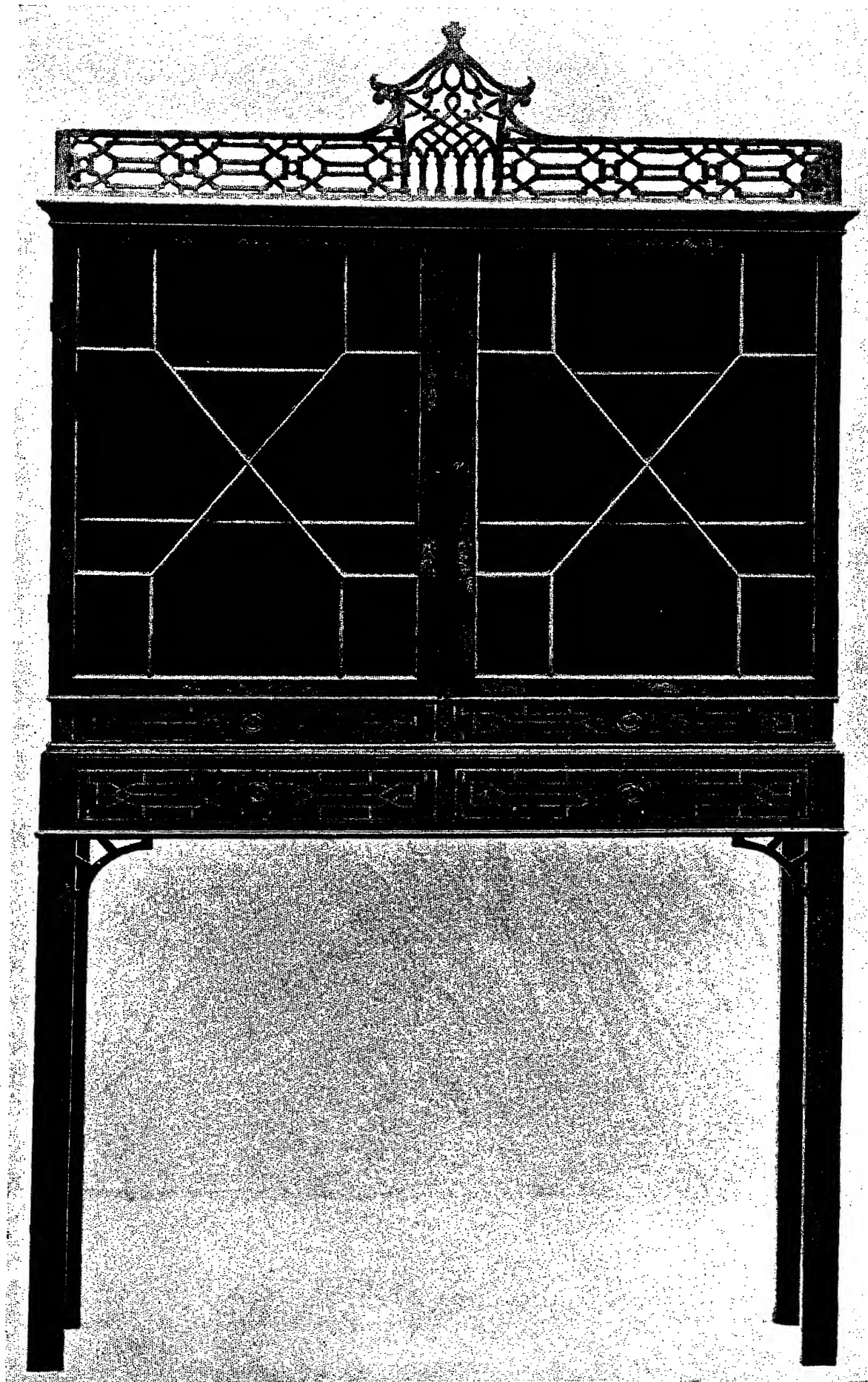


FIG. 19.—BLACK LACQUER CHINA-CASE.  
Property of MRS. ASSHETON SMITH.

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FIG. 20.—BLACK LACQUER CORNER CHINA-CASE. Property of Mrs. ASSHETON SMITH.

is extremely rare, but there is little doubt that these specimens were made when this celebrated firm was remodelling the decorations of the house. In the commode, fig. 21, the decoration is a strange mixture of Adam and oriental design ; the front opens in three doors enclosing a series of drawers ; the groundwork throughout is of a delicate green, lacquered in gold, silver, and a little red, with British inspirations of Chinese life and landscapes ; the carved Adam garrya pendant at the four corners, the ovals of the side-doors and fluted taper legs have nothing oriental in their character, but the proportions and colours are so cleverly blended, that this divergence of style does not seem amiss. In fig. 22 the pattern of the beautiful wall-paper can be seen behind a wardrobe commode of about the same date as the last example, although of rather different style. The front, formed of two serpentine doors, opens on a series of sliding shelves, and is lacquered with the design of a tea-garden in gold and silver on a pea-green ground, in higher relief than is usual at this period ; the lower portion opens in two drawers decorated to match the doors, and the sides are lacquered with designs of conventional Chinese birds and animals ; the simple cornice and channelled frieze, with the introduction of garrya pendants at the corners, suggest a date about 1770. Fig.

23 shows the mantelpiece and mirror in

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this interesting room; they are of pure Adam style, and correspond in date to the furniture. Fig. 24 is a quaint wall lantern of brass, of about the date 1770, probably made in connection with these rooms. The top is of pagoda shape and surmounts the glass arranged to contain a lamp, now replaced by a modern electric fitting; the base is formed of a Chinese fretwork finishing in bells and pendants.

The very beautiful lacquer commode designed by Adam for Osterley is illustrated in fig. 25; here the treatment is far more elaborate and

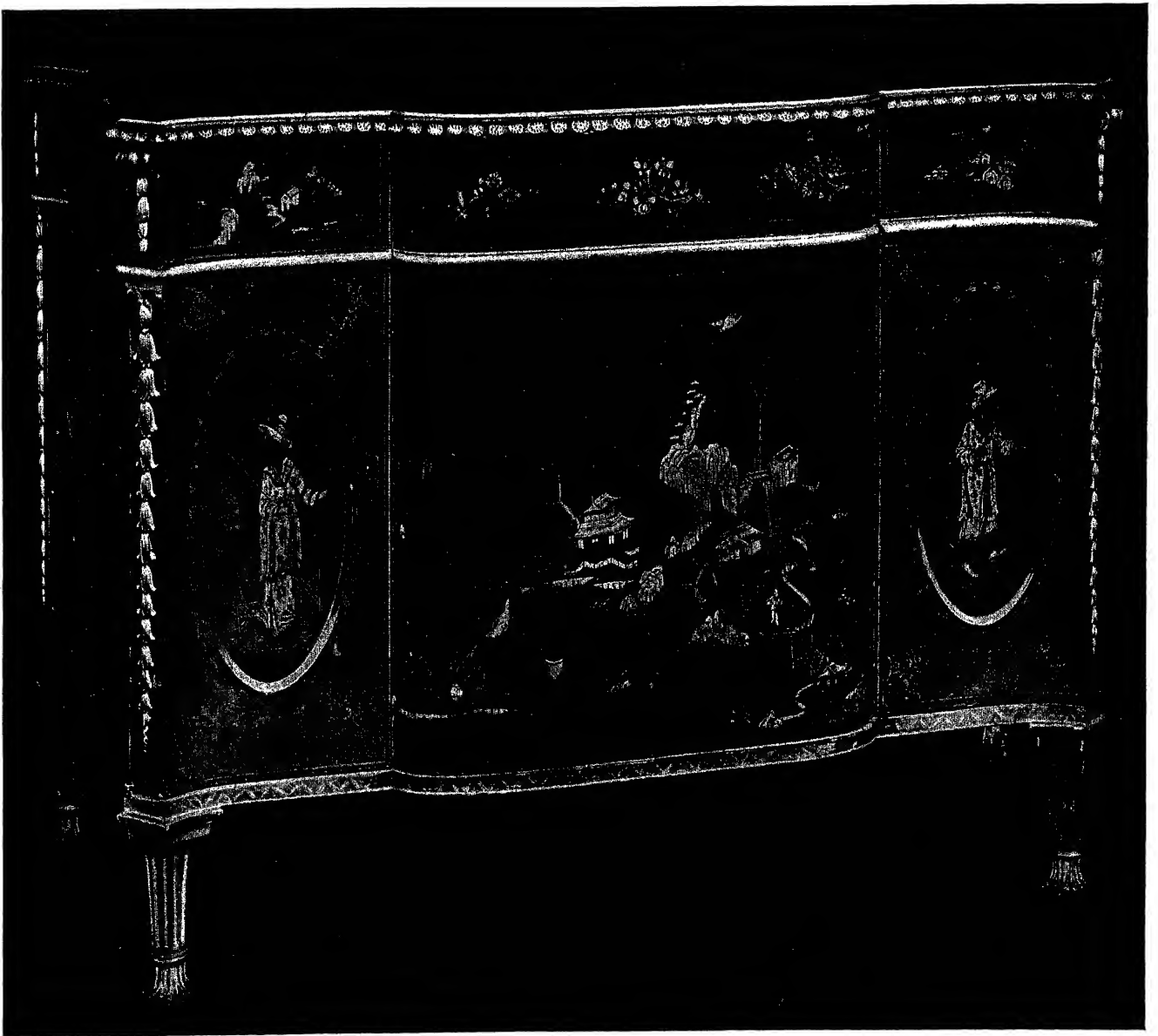


FIG. 21.—GREEN LACQUER COMMODOE. Height, 3 feet; length, 4 feet 8 inches; depth, 2 feet.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.



FIG. 22.—GREEN LACQUER COMMODE. Height, 5 feet ; width, 4 feet.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.



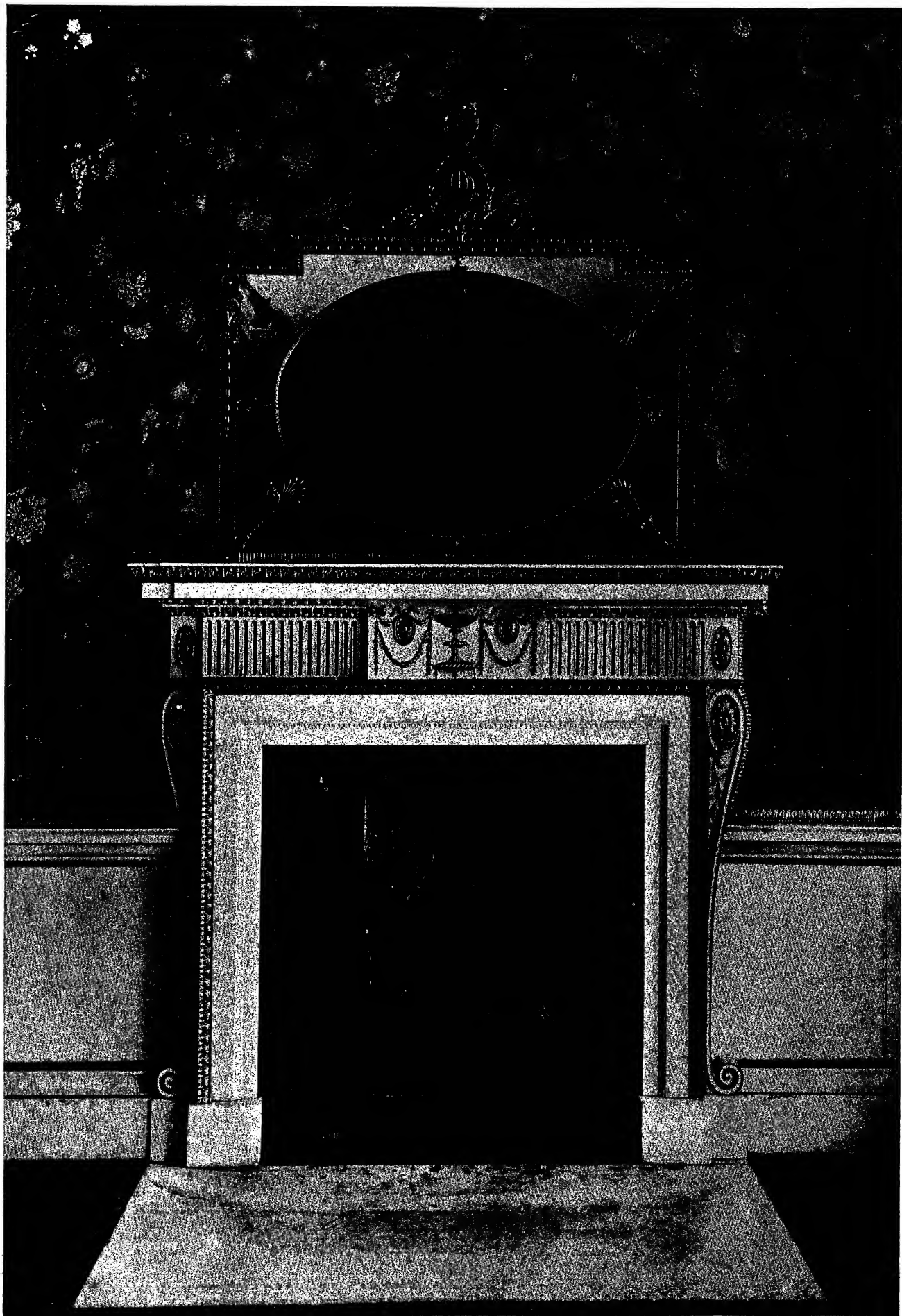


FIG. 23.—GILT WHITE AND GREEN OVERMANTEL AND MIRROR ON CHINESE WALL-PAPER.  
Mantelpiece, height, 5 feet 6 inches ; width, 6 feet 2 inches. Mirror, extreme height, 4 feet ; width, 5 feet.  
Property at NOSTELL PRIORY.

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severe than in the preceding specimens. The serpentine and hexagonal front is divided by six pilasters, decorated with pendants and headed by rams' heads and garrya swags, finely modelled in gilt brass. The top is banded with a guilloch moulding of the same material; the front opening in one long door is ornamented with fine black and gold lacquer of Chinese warriors in a landscape, the top drawer and sides being decorated with smaller designs. The feet are vase-shaped and fluted, standing upon the tapered block introduced by Adam on furniture. The effect of the whole piece is exceedingly rich, and its finish is remarkable.

Osterley, originally a Tudor house, was rebuilt by Francis Child about 1760 from designs by Robert Adam, who also designed most of the furniture. Horace Walpole, on visiting Osterley in 1773, says in one of his letters :—

‘ On Friday we went to see—oh the palace of palaces—and yet a palace sans crown, sans coronet; but such expense! such taste! such profusion! There is a hall, library, breakfast-room, eating-room, all *chefs d'œuvres* of Adam; a gallery one hundred and thirty feet long, and a drawing-room worthy of Eve before the fall. Mrs. Child's dressing-room is full of pictures, gold filigree, China and Japan. So is all the house; the chairs are taken from antique lyres and make a charming harmony.’

The top of a table (fig. 26) is an interesting, late example of lacquer, being of about the date 1775, and of a light buff colour; the decoration is in brown and black, etched with a little gold; the drawing is extremely feeble in execution and shows the decadence of this art, which, almost abandoned towards the close of the eighteenth century, reappeared at intervals during

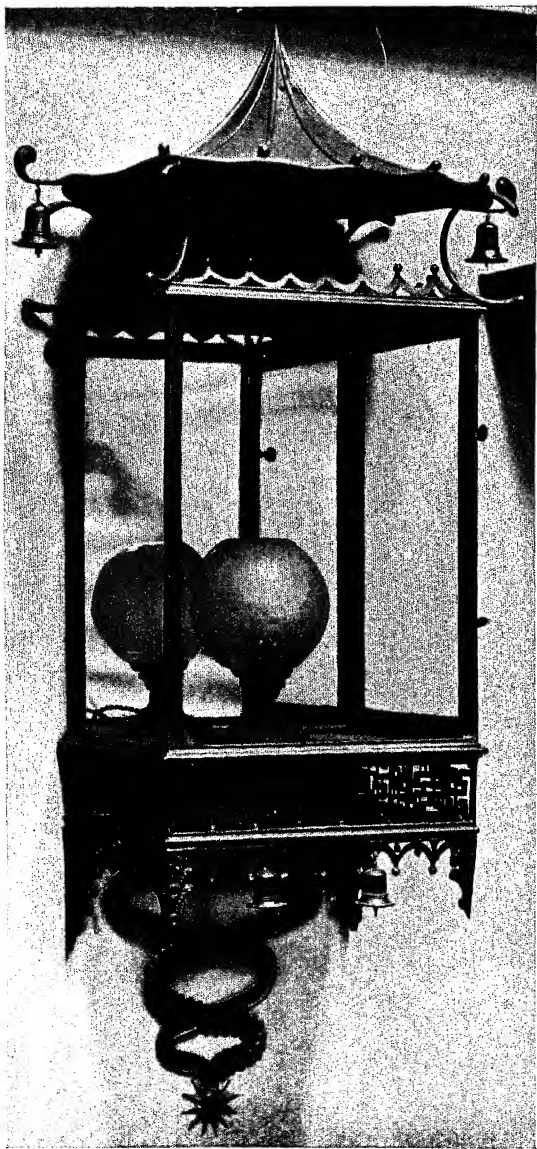


FIG. 24.—BRASS WALL-LANTERN.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

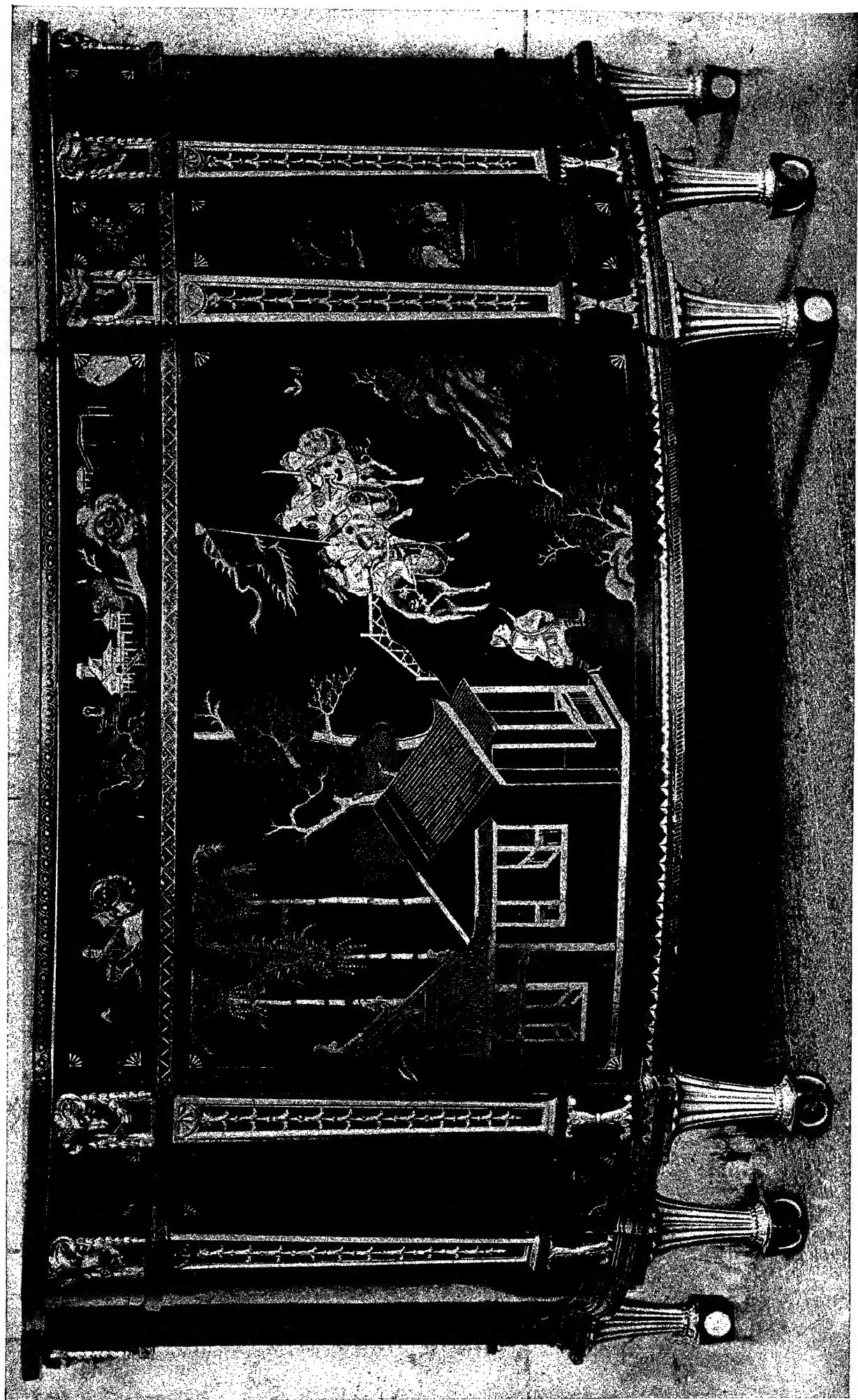


FIG. 25.—LACQUER COMMODE. Height, 3 feet; length, 5 feet. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

the early part of the nineteenth in the form of work-tables, whatnots, and tea-trays.

On the walls of small rooms, in place of real Chinese paper, a so-called Paper Mosaic work was sometimes employed, and made by ladies of fashion. This consisted of paper plants, butterflies, and birds cut out and pasted on to a coloured foundation. Lady Mary Coke, in her diary, 1772, writes :—

‘I called on the Duchess of Norfolk, who I found sorting butterflies cut out of indien paper for a room she is going to furnish.’

Another favourite form of decoration for small rooms was the ornamenting of ceilings and cornices, lustres and candlesticks, with shells.

‘Mrs. Delany excelled in shell work and attained to such perfection in it, that she executed cornices of the most beautiful designs, formed of shells, which when painted or coloured over appeared like the finest carving, but for smaller objects like the lustre, etc., they were left in their natural colour, which, arranged by her, had the most



FIG. 26.—LACQUER TOP OF COMMODE.

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beautiful effect, and united the brilliancy of enamel with the inimitable tracery and harmony of nature.'

These curious attempts by amateurs must have been more peculiar than beautiful, but were no doubt only called into a brief existence through the various eccentricities of the many Chinese crazes which have left a lasting mark on our furniture by introducing Chinese-Chippendale and English lacquer.

## CHAPTER II



BEFORE leaving the subject of what is commonly known as Chippendale furniture, it is necessary to give a few examples of this style, such as clocks, mirrors, and commodes inlaid with various coloured woods that were contemporary with the early designs of Adam and his followers.

In Chippendale's bill, dated 1770, for the furniture supplied to Nostell Priory is an entry for the commode (fig. 27). Although these English commodes of cabriole form are rare, the internal construction, the character of the inlay, and the inferior quality of the metal-work is unmistakable and conclusive of their origin. In the Nostell commode the undulating form compares favourably with good French work of the time ; the front and sides are inlaid with graceful garlands of flowers in coloured woods upon a ground of stained sycamore, commonly called Hairwood or Harewood, and beneath these are inlaid classical vases supporting a broken column in the style of Adam, the whole being surrounded by a dark rosewood border of late Louis xv. design. The inlaid top is edged with a brass guilloch moulding, brass fittings also decorating the shoulders, feet, and lower edge of the doors. The inside is veneered with Hungarian ash stained grey, much resembling watered silk of that colour, then so fashionable ; the handles are English in type, and of the kind employed on ordinary mahogany furniture.

Fig. 28, from Hatfield House, is another brilliant example of these interesting commodes, evidently made by Chippendale, for the metal fittings to the top, shoulders, base, and feet are cast from the

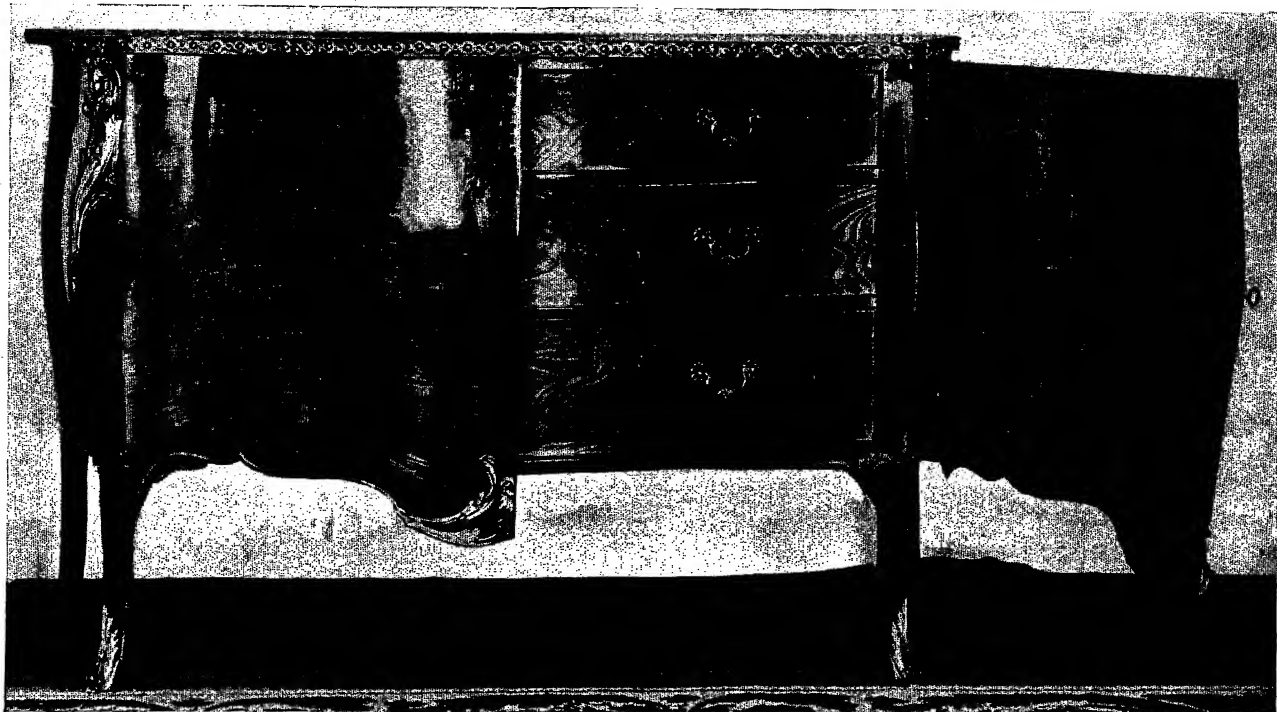


FIG. 27.—INLAID COMMODE. Height, 3 feet ; length, 5 feet 2 inches.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

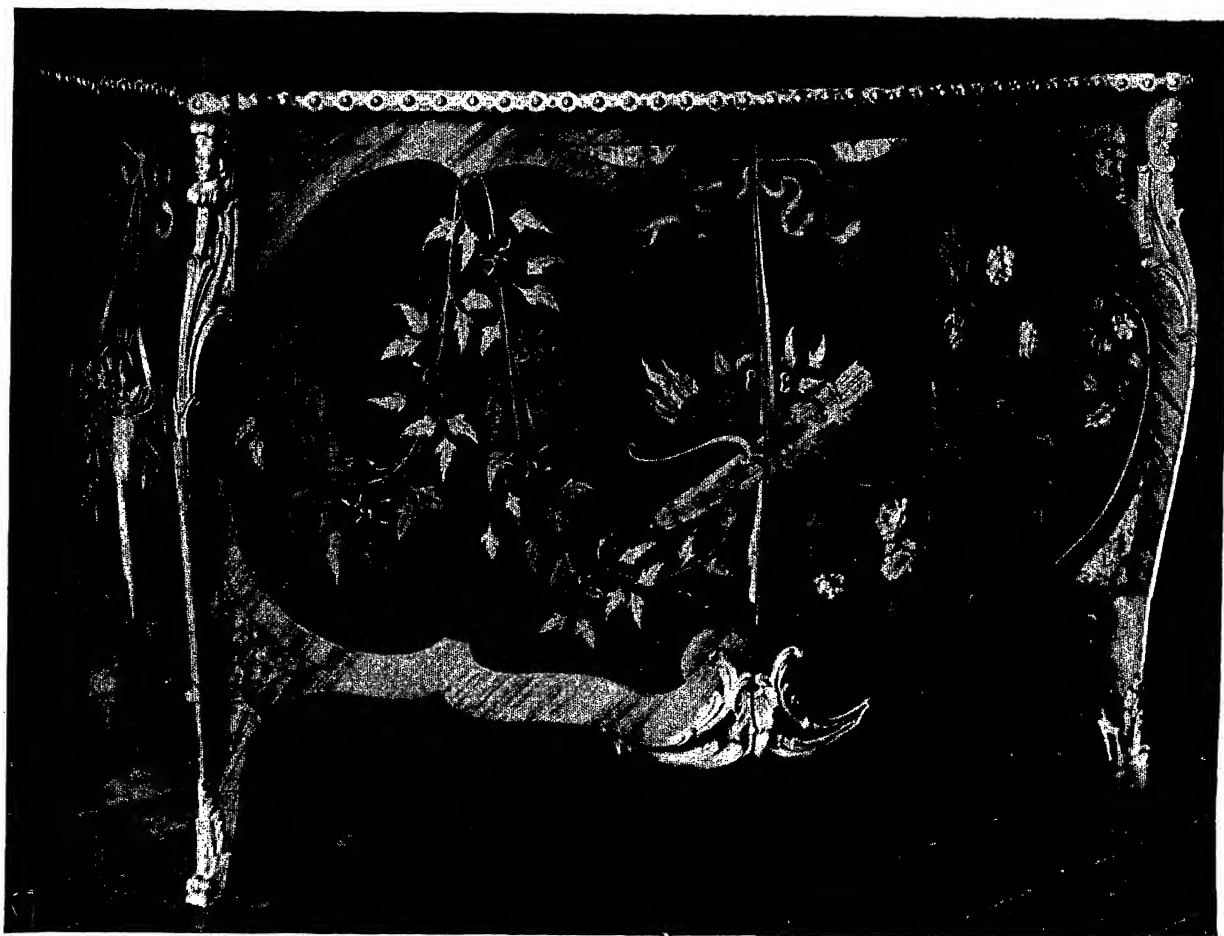


FIG. 28.—INLAID COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 10 inches ; length, 4 feet 2 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

same moulds as those of the last specimen. The front and sides are veneered, with panels of mahogany inlaid with coloured garlands and baskets of flowers, surrounded with broad borders of tulip-wood and small triangular panels of holly knots; where the doors meet, a trophy of Cupid's bow, quiver, and torch is introduced, a detail much used by Adam; the legs are rather shorter than those of the preceding commode, but the same brass feet have been adapted to their use.

It can be noticed that the inlay and metal-work of these two com-

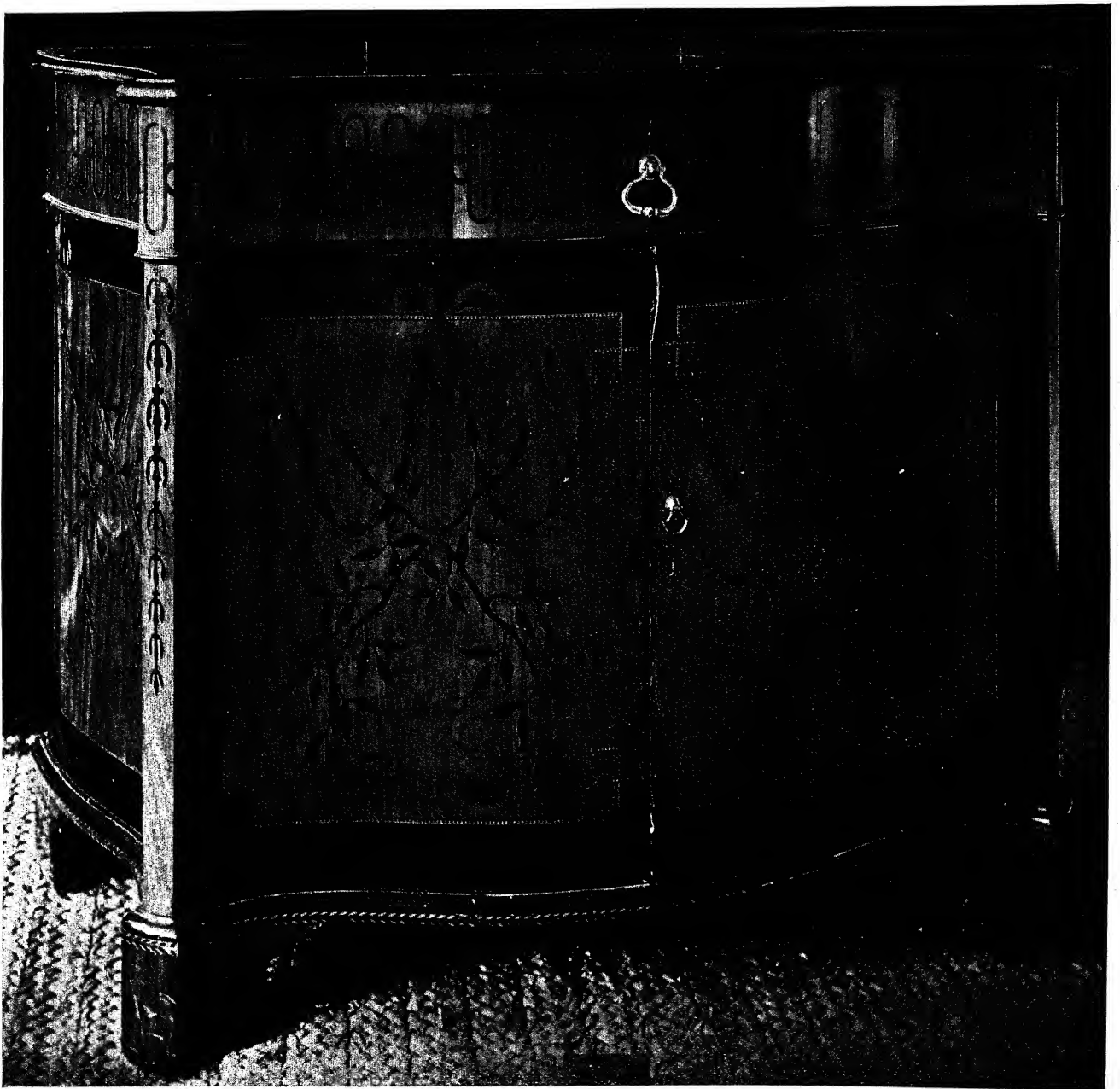


FIG. 29.—INLAID COMMODORE. Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

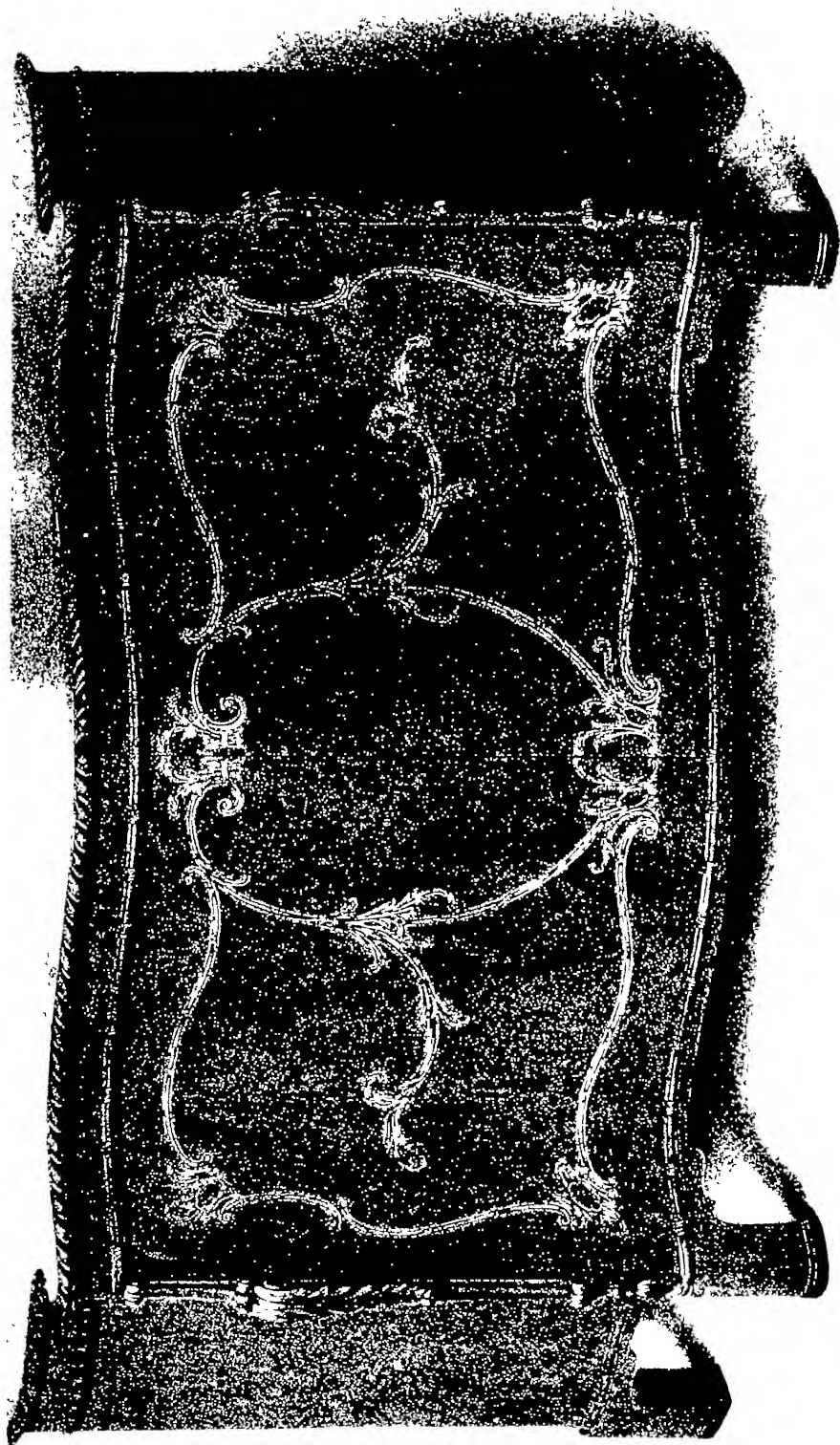
PLATE II (All of SATINWOOD)

INLAID COMMODE

HEIGHT 15 INCHES  
WIDTH 12 INCHES  
DEPTH 12 INCHES

PROPERTY OF  
LADY RUSSELL









# ENGLISH FURNITURE

modes, although graceful and full of character, is rather coarser than that found upon good contemporary French work. A third example is given on Plate II. Here the whole ground is a veneer of yew, inlaid with a serpentine scrolled design of light wood, enclosing a bouquet of flowers; the top, base, and shoulders are edged with a metal ornamentation of similar character to that used on the preceding commodes.

From the resemblance of fig. 28 to fig. 27 it is certain that inlaid commodes of foreign taste were introduced and made here by Chippendale,

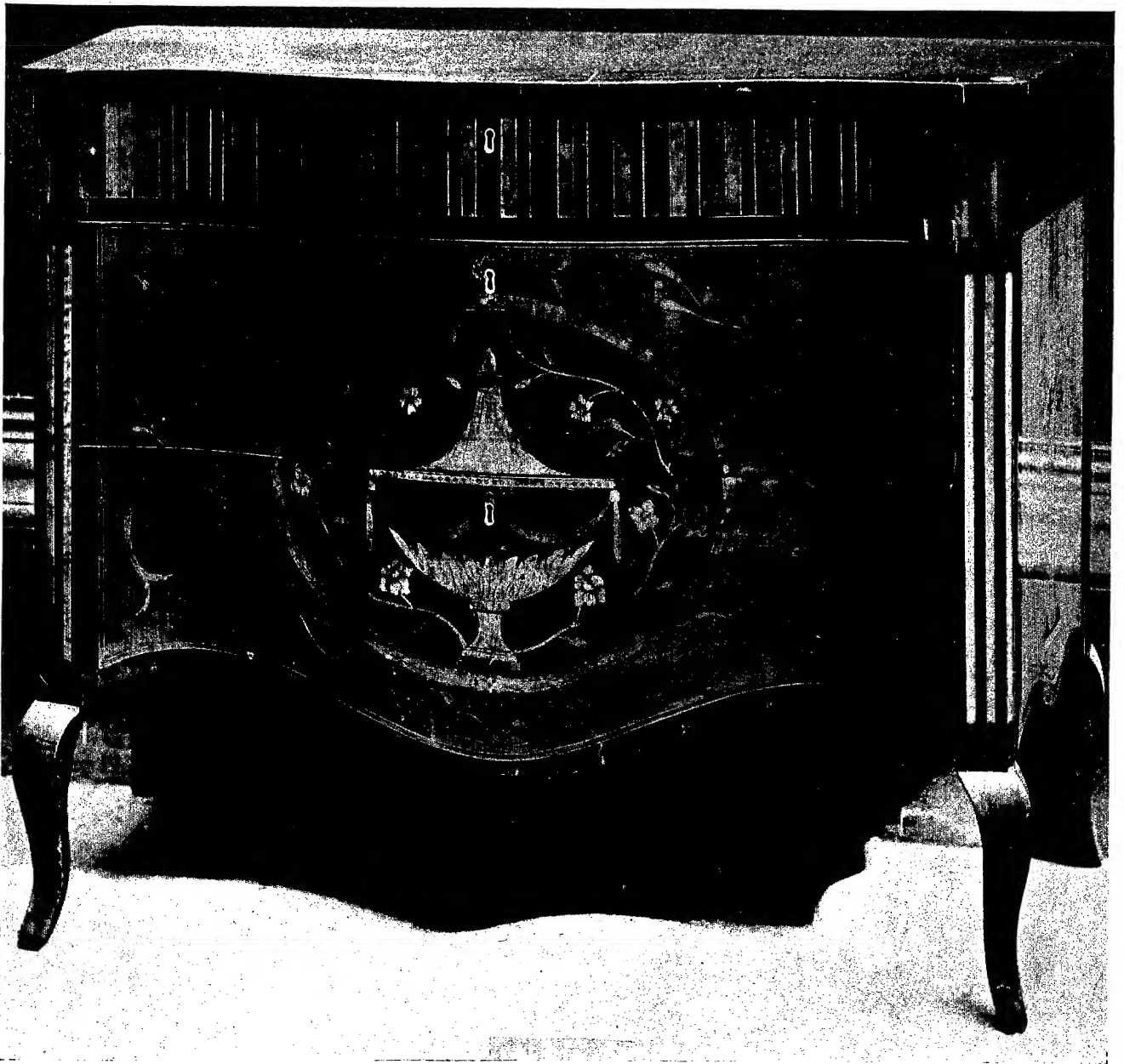


FIG. 30.—INLAID COMMODOE. Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.

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and that the development of this article of furniture, which later became so fashionable, was probably due to his introduction. The next step in their evolution is shown in fig. 29, from Hardwick. Here the serpentine front is maintained, but the base is straight and rests upon ordinary bracket feet; the brass fittings are omitted, and the motive of the inlay is more or less in the style of Adam. The frieze is decorated with a large chain pattern of mahogany inlaid on satinwood, and opens as

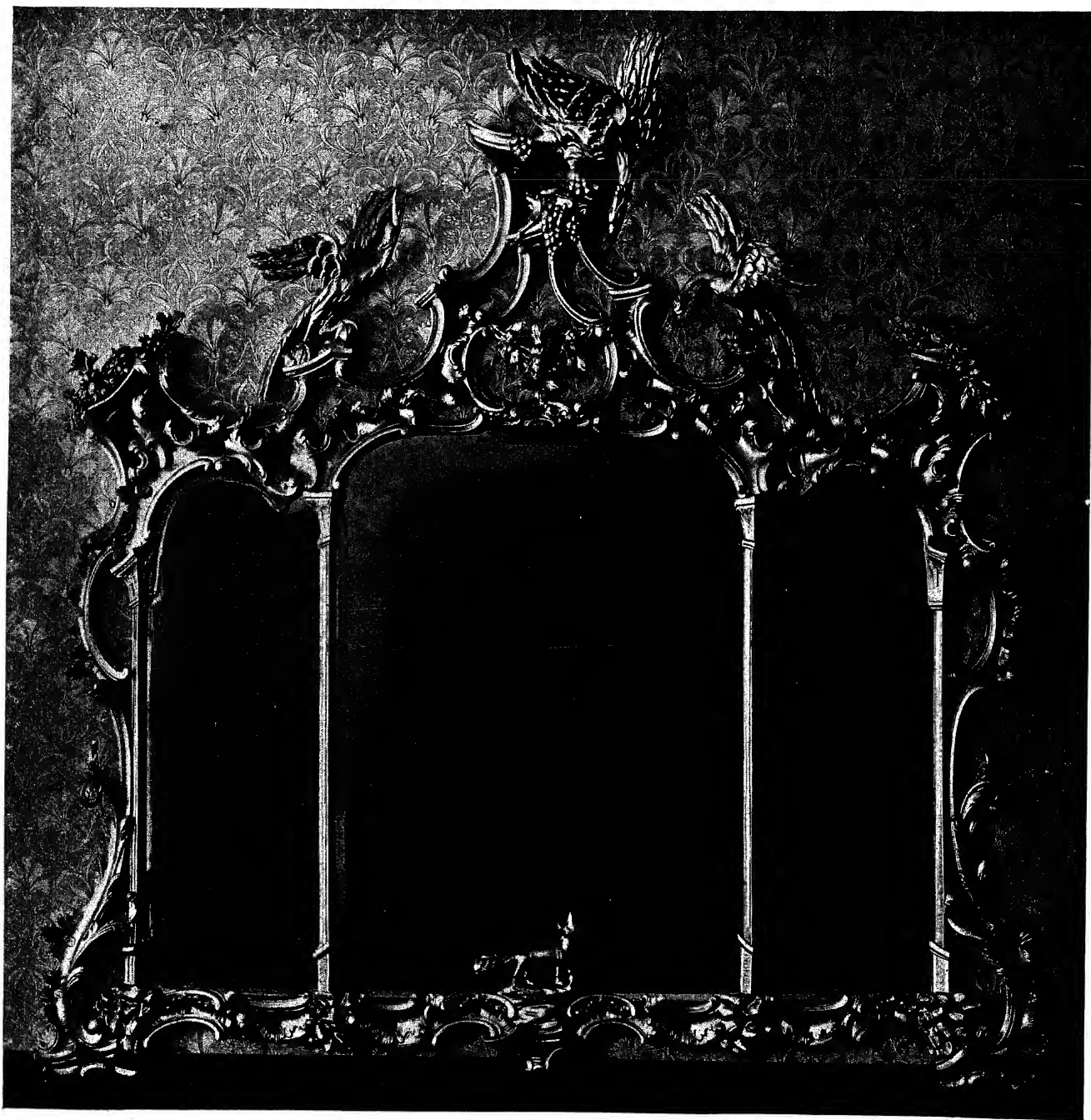


FIG. 31.—GILT MIRROR. Width, 5 feet 6 inches. Property of MESSRS. J. MALLET AND SON.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

a drawer; beneath this are cupboard doors (enclosing drawers), inlaid with branches and swags of garrya in brilliant green on a satinwood ground, surrounded by a broad border of mahogany; a narrow feathering of brown and yellow inlay finishes the base.

The bellied front and cabriole legs of the earlier specimens is preserved in fig. 30, but the front opens in three drawers, which are decorated with a coarse inlay of mahogany and satinwood on a sycamore ground. The central panel, representing a classical urn surrounded by sprays of flowers, is significant of the date which in both pieces is from 1770 to 1775.

A very great number of mirrors of the school of Chippendale still exist. These are of open and often fantastic ornament carved in soft wood and gilt. This style replaced the solid and unperforated frame surmounted by a pediment that was in fashion during the first half of the century. Fig. 31 represents the French rococo type of about 1750. It is divided into three compartments, the centre rising in a series of C scrolls, upon which is perched a crow with a bunch of grapes; the fox, out of all proportion to the bird, looks upwards from the lower portion of the frame. The carving is full of spirit, and the interlacement of the C scrolling ingenious. Fig. 32 is a more ordinary mirror of about the same date, with the pagoda motive as a cresting, the bells being repeated on the scrolled finials of



FIG. 32.—GILT MIRROR.  
Height, 5 feet 3 inches; width, 2 feet 7 inches.  
Property of CHARLES TUDWAY, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

the corners. Although coarse in execution, this mirror is extremely effective, possessing great originality of line.

Another mirror of about 1758 is fig. 33. Here the scrolled tracery is extremely light and graceful, becoming heavier in its proportions towards the top, and finishing in a bold trefoil of acanthus.

The mirror (fig. 34) is of great interest, combining the florid C scrolls of Chippendale with the classical reticence of Adam; the oval, the honeysuckle finial, the vase, swags, and pateræ being of this later style. It is therefore a very representative transitional piece of about the date 1763.

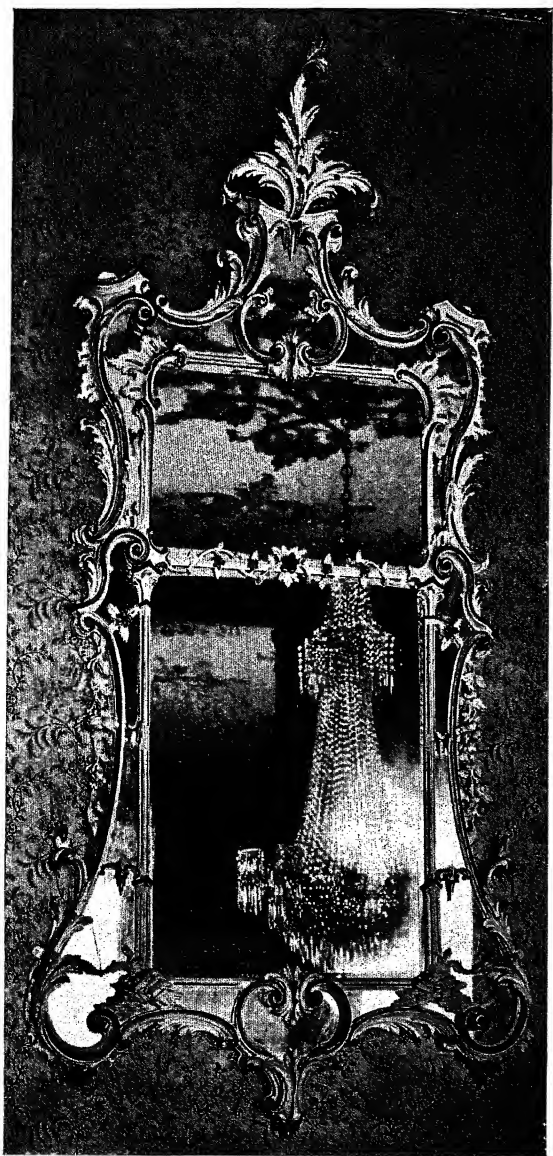


FIG. 33.—GILT MIRROR.  
Height, 7 feet 6 inches ; width, 4 feet.  
Property of CHARLES TUDWAY, Esq.

In the background can be seen a good specimen of a Chinese paper, the marble mantelpiece beneath being of Adam design. A later mirror and its mantelpiece from the house, which this master is said to have built for himself in Bedford Square, is shown in fig. 35. Here the structure is architectural, the detail delicate but severe, and in the full style of about 1770; a classical urn and two sphinxes form the cresting of this mirror, and in it can be seen reflected the ceiling of the room. The mantelpiece is of white marble, and probably executed by an Italian workman.

Tall clock-cases continued to be made in walnut and oak until 1725, the latter being often decorated in lacquer or painted with pastoral designs. Fig. 36 represents a clock-case lacquered and painted with Watteau subjects in colour on a dark green ground, the drawing of the figures

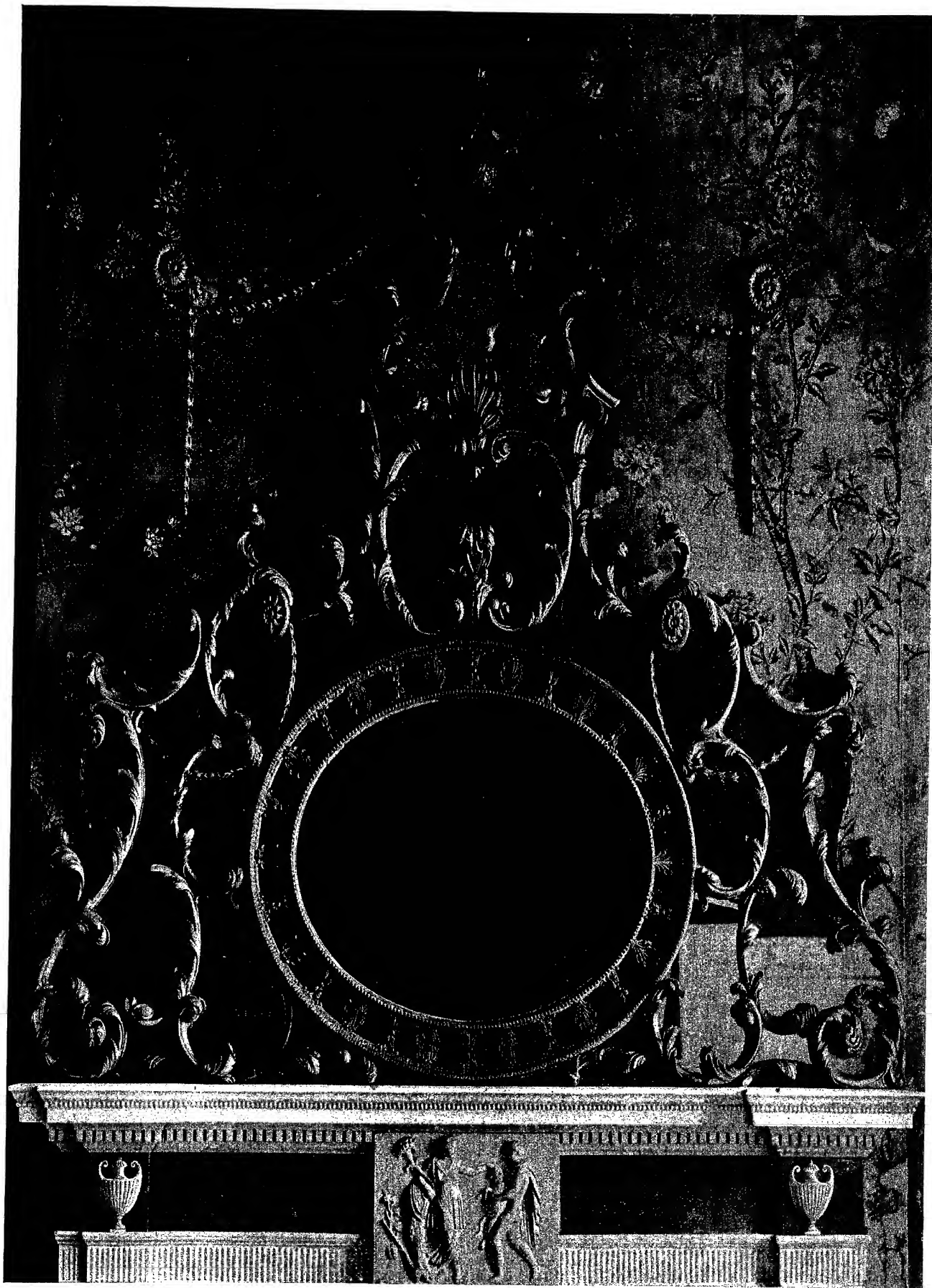


FIG. 34.—GILT MIRROR. Property of SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, Bart.



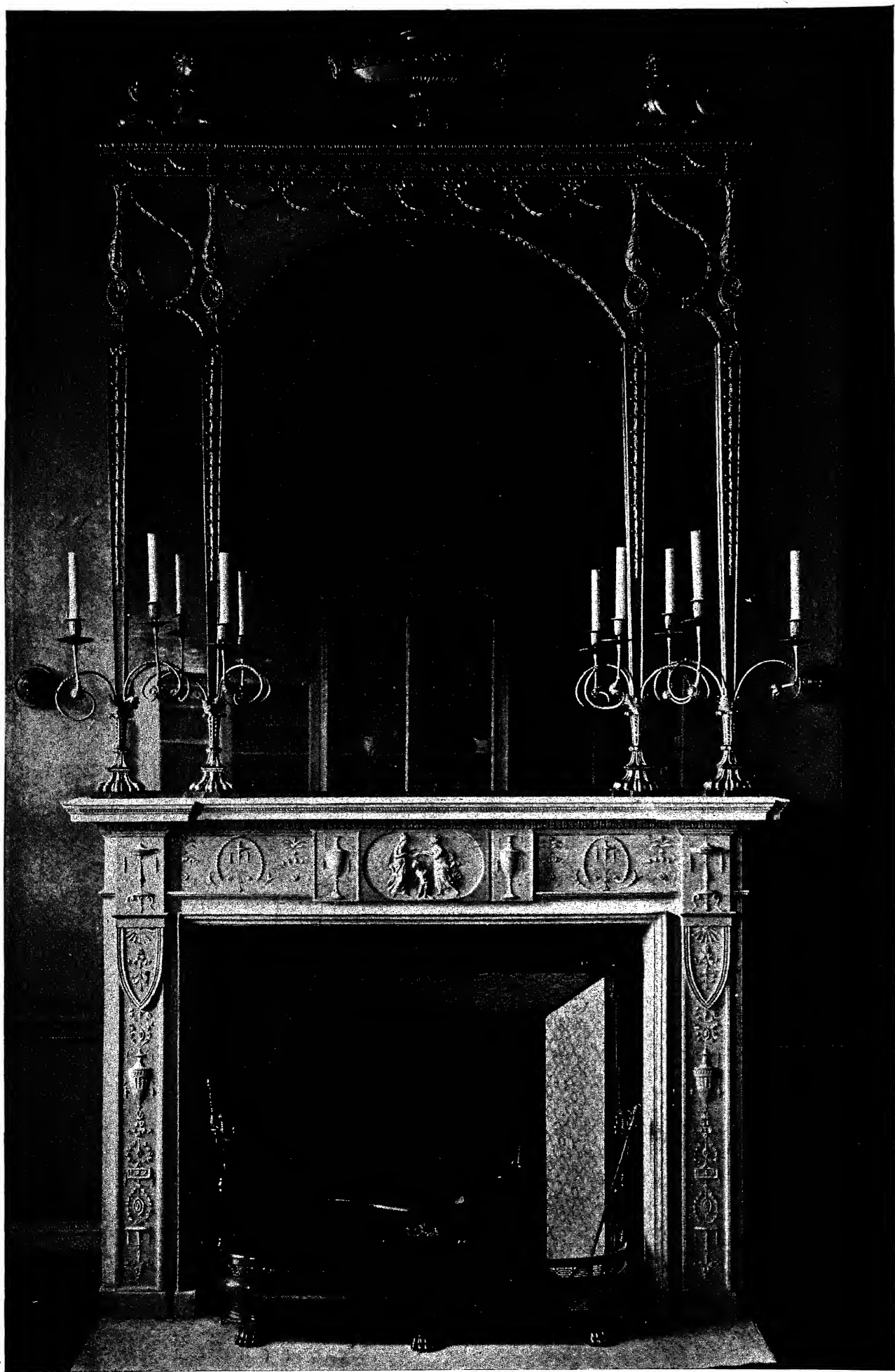


FIG. 35.—GILT MIRROR. Property of WEEDON GROSSMITH, Esq.

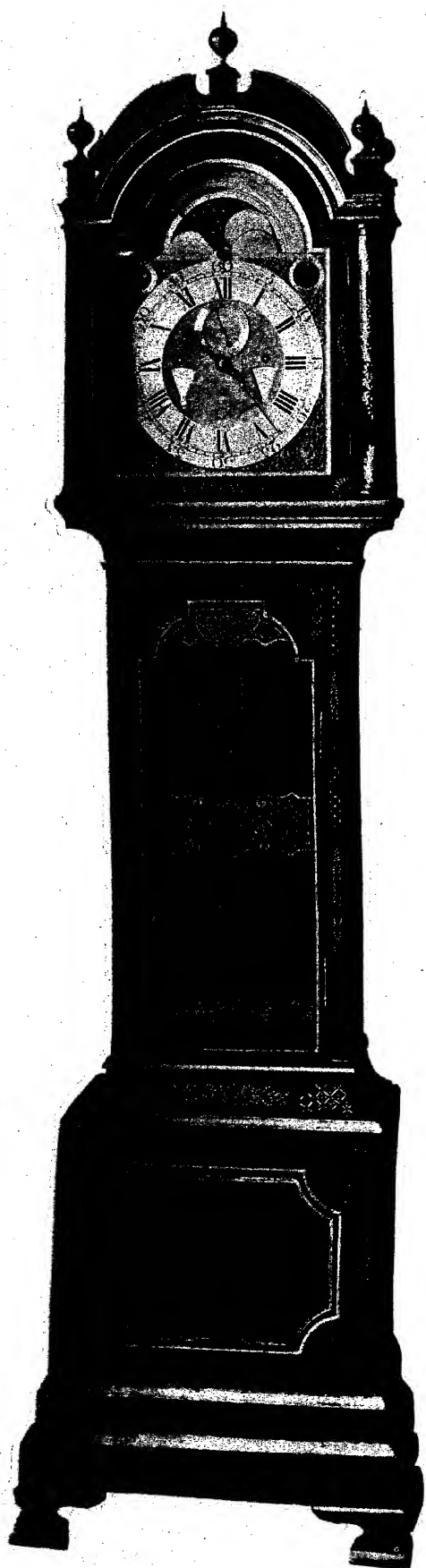


FIG. 36.—PAINTED AND LACQUERED  
CLOCK. Height, 7 feet.  
Property of PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS, Esq.

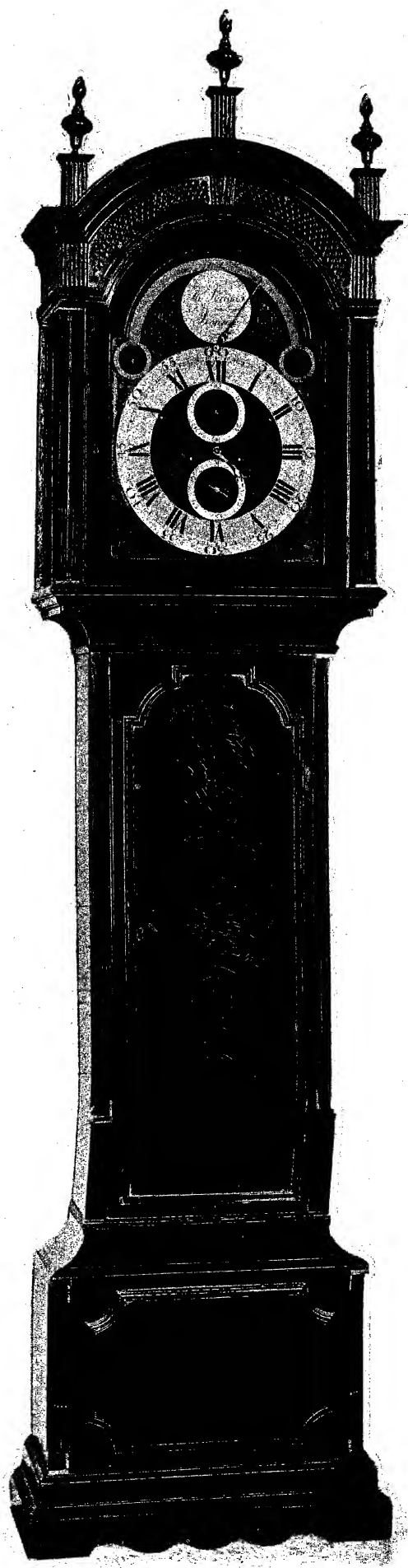


FIG. 37.—MAHOGANY CLOCK.  
Property of the HON. LADY CHARLOTTE MARIA  
NORTH and R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



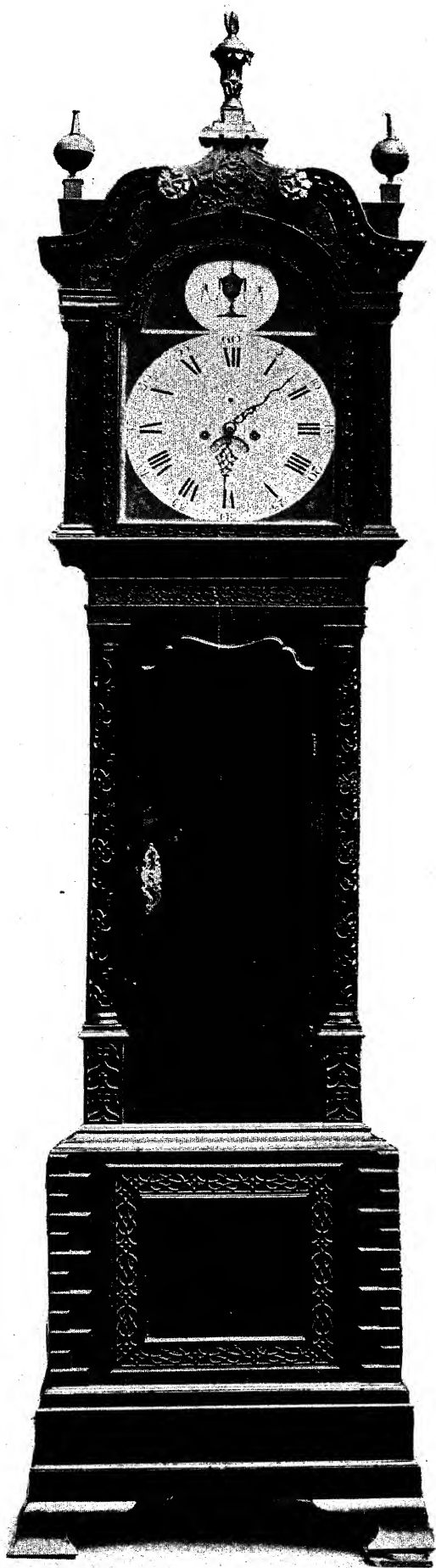


FIG. 38.—MAHOGANY CLOCK.  
Height, 8 feet 8 inches ; width, 2 feet 2 inches.  
Property of H. PERCY DEAN, Esq.

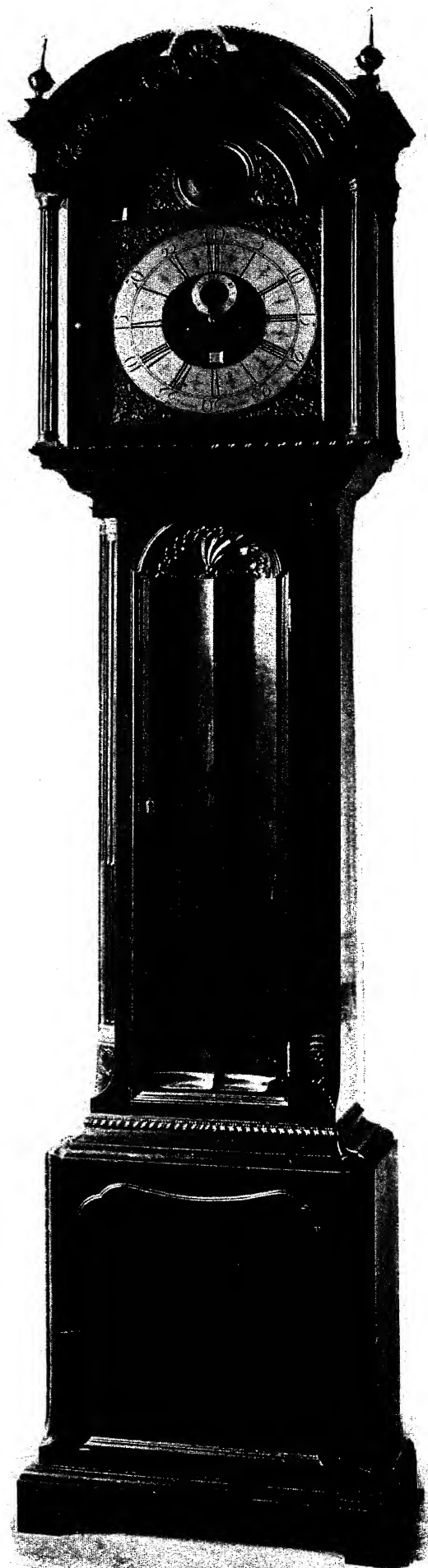


FIG. 39.—MAHOGANY CLOCK.  
Height, 8 feet 2 inches.  
Property of LADY RUSSELL.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

being unusually good for this class of work. Watteau was resident in this country in 1720, and no doubt this kind of decoration was inspired by his work. It is interesting to notice that the centre band of lacquer across the door of the clock repeats the design of the brass-work on the dial.

A large and finely proportioned clock in mahogany, a few years later than the last example, is shown in fig. 37. The case is without decoration save for the introduction of some reeded panel mouldings and the usual fluted columns to the hood and sides; these are again repeated on the base, possibly with the idea of reducing its width. The mechanism is most elaborate and complete, being a fine example of eighteenth-century clockmaking.

Fig. 38 represents a finely carved specimen in mahogany of about 1745. The heading consists of a scrolled pediment centring in a vase-shaped lamp, supported on open fretwork pilasters; the body is plain but enclosed between three-quarter columns perforated in the Chinese manner; the bricking at the corners of the base is characteristic of Chippendale's cases, but does not harmonise with the rest of the ornament. Fig. 39 is a clock of rather later date. The mouldings of the heading are elaborate, and the double hollow to the door, surmounted by a carved lunette, is a rare feature. It can be noticed that the bases of these tall clocks increase in height towards the middle of the century.

Fig. 40 is a gracefully proportioned clock of about 1765, with a hood of pagoda shape, supported on extremely slender Corinthian columns. The body is panelled with plain mouldings cornered with pateræ of the period.

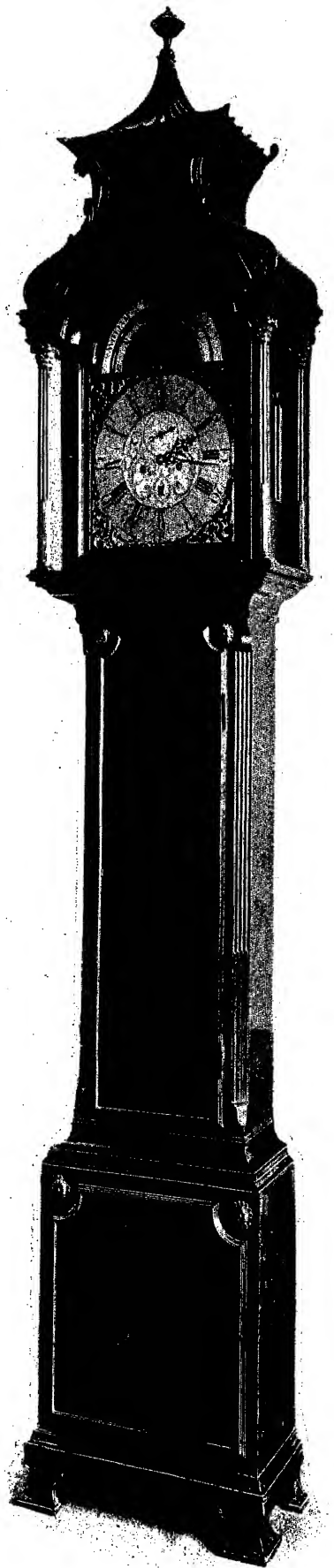


FIG. 40.—MAHOGANY CLOCK  
Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

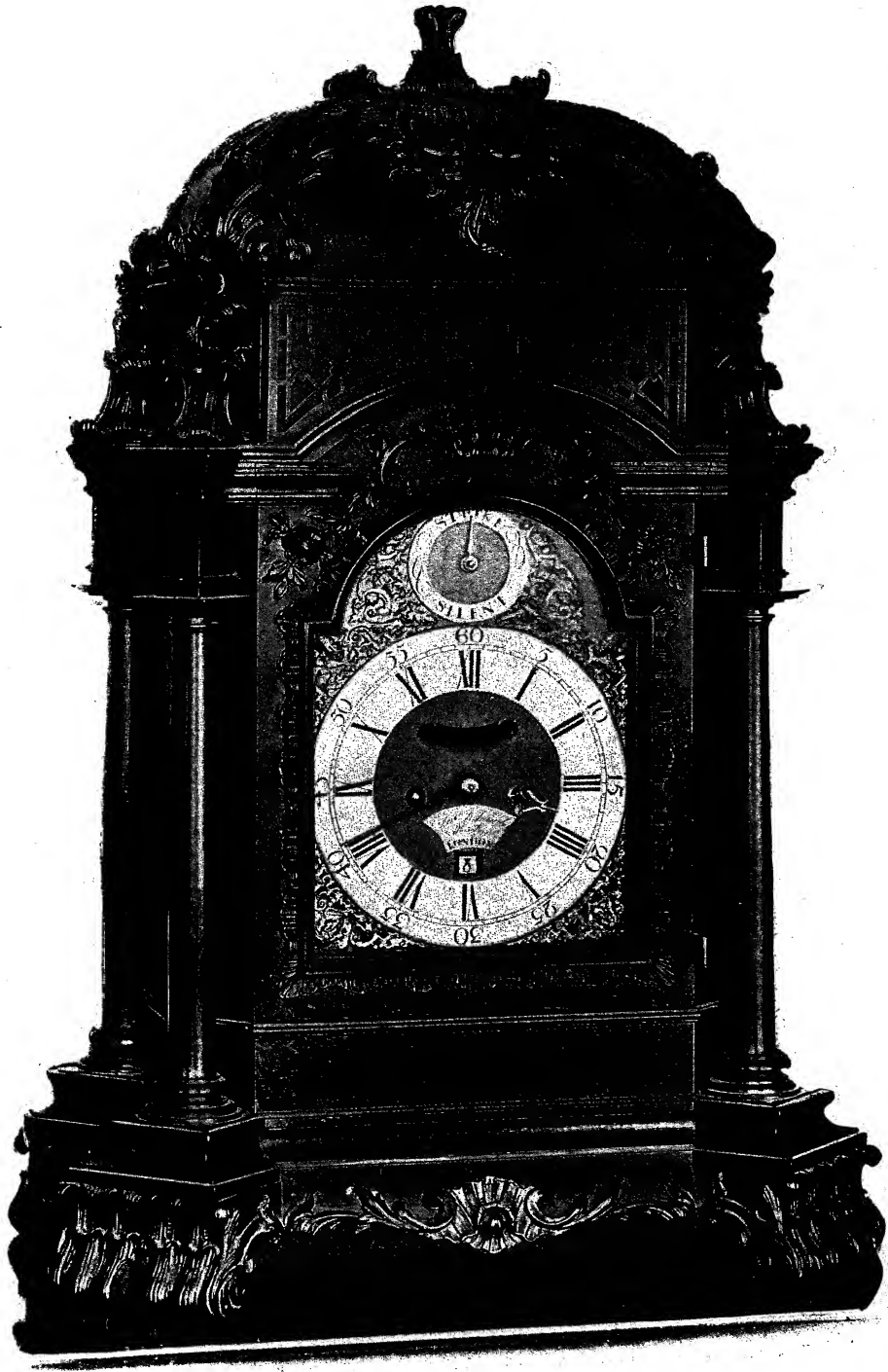


FIG. 41.—MAHOGANY CARTEL CLOCK. Height, 1 foot 4 inches.

Cartel and Bracket clocks, during the reigns of George I. and II., had to a great measure taken the place of grandfather clocks in rooms, and this change in fashion may account for the small number of highly finished tall clocks that appear to have been made between 1720 and 1750. Fig. 41 is a Bracket clock in mahogany of about 1750, made by Chippendale and illustrated in the first edition of the *Director*. The

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ingenious and elaborate top is of dome shape, supported at the corners by plain columns resting upon double feet, clothed and scrolled with acanthus. The carving is of fine execution, and the wood is of a rich dark brown.

A barometer-case (fig. 42) shows the influence of Adam in the originality of its shape, which is both ingenious and practical; the date of this is about 1765, and is a good example of careful and minute carving.

Robert Adam, whilst studying architecture in Italy, based his style on that of his friend Piranesi, the Roman architect. The latter published a book of designs on decoration and furniture in the classical taste, dedicating it to Adam. In comparing the designs of Piranesi and Adam it is at once apparent how the former originated and the latter improved and adapted this Italian style to English requirements. There are pages of Piranesi's drawings that Adam reproduced fearlessly as his own, enlarging and simplifying the detail of the originals; originals that had in their turn been taken from Etruscan, Greek, and late Roman motives, for the art of decoration is but intelligent plagiarism. Full of his new discoveries, Adam returned to England in 1758, was appointed architect to the King in 1762, and introduced a style in architecture, decoration, and furniture that influenced taste for nearly fifty years; the motives of late Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Sheraton, Shearer, and even Empire being the outcome of his teaching and style.

In his first designs for furniture Adam combined the foliated C scroll with the classical detail so generally associated with his name, but soon commenced to influence the manufacture of furniture of simple and restrained taste, without inlay and with but little carving. The small escritoire with drawers (Plate III.) is a good example of

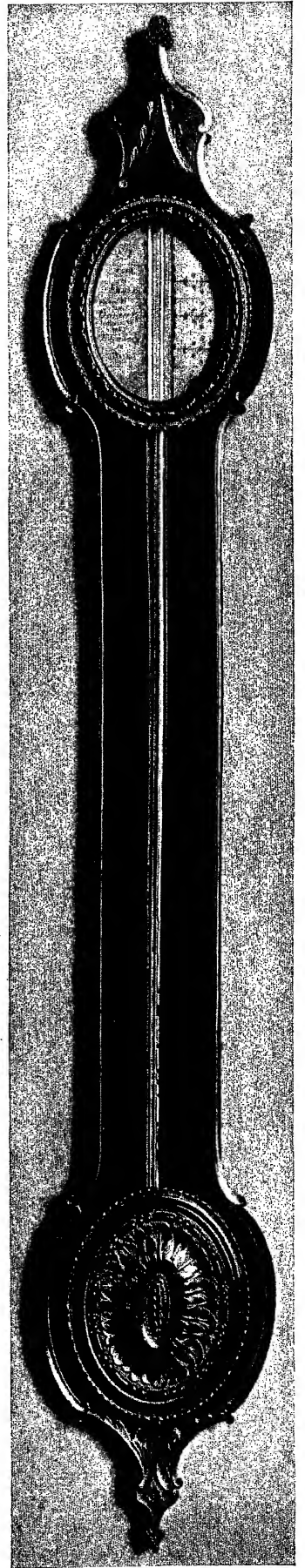


FIG. 42.—MAHOGANY BAROMETER. Property of ALFRED DAVIS, Esq.

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this quiet style. The upper portion opens as a writing-flap, and is headed with delicately carved festoons of garrya. This is divided by a carved moulding from the lower portion, which opens in seven drawers, cock-beaded and lined with ebony ; long pendants to match the festoons decorate the corners of the serpentine front, which is most successful in its grace and proportions.

Another of these escritaires, a few years later in date, is fig. 43, interesting for its double gallery of carved fretwork ; the top compartment forms a writing-desk, and is decorated with light carving to match the top. The drawers are perfectly plain, fitted with brass handles of about 1770. The legs are of short taper form.



FIG. 43.—MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE. Property of the DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH.

PLATE III (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE

HEIGHT, 3 FEET 2 INCHES

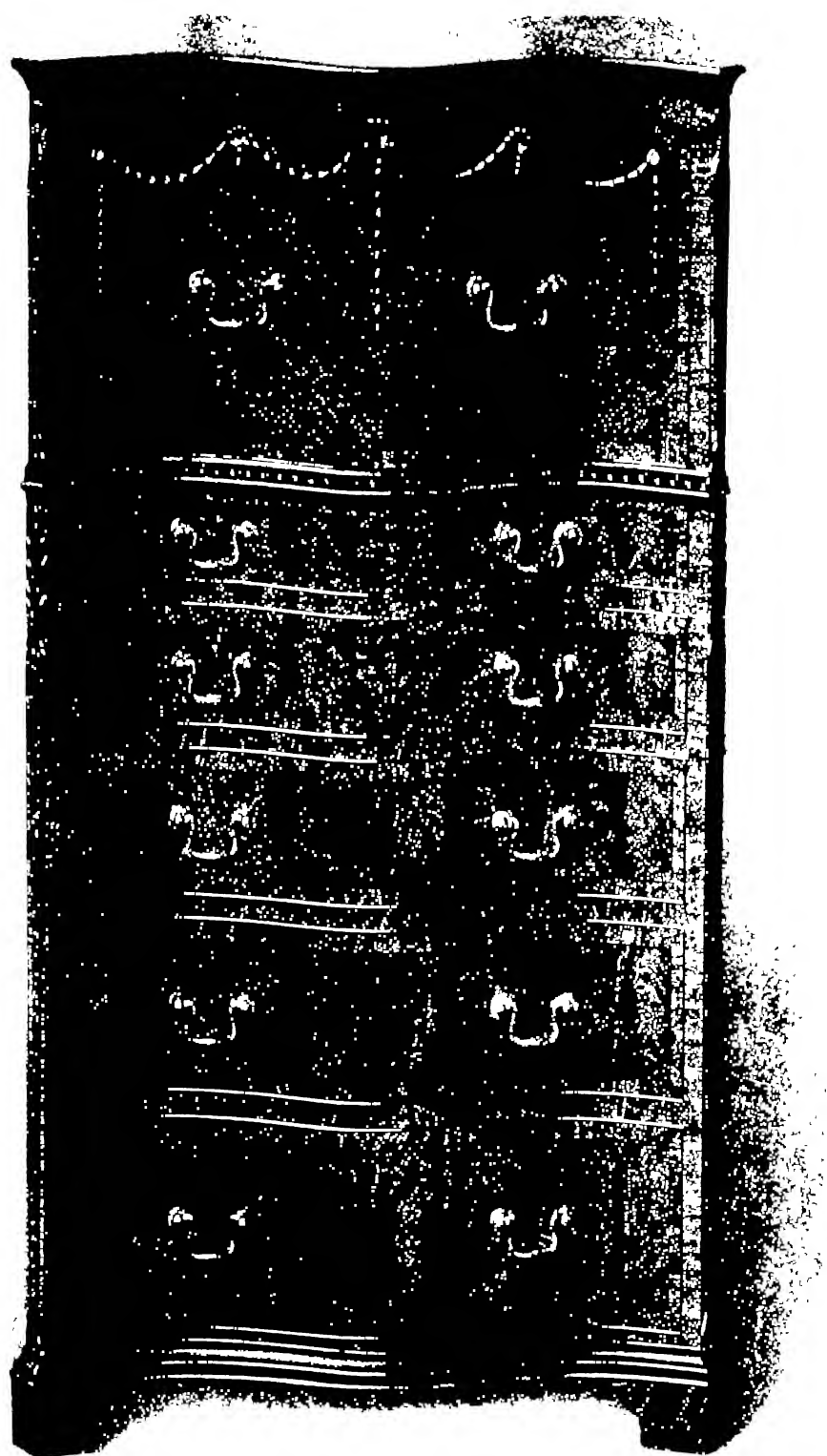
DEPTH, 1 FOOT 2 „

WIDTH, 2 FEET 3 „

PROPERTY OF

MESSRS, MORANT









# ENGLISH FURNITURE

At the beginning of George the Third's reign, ordinary tall mahogany writing-cabinets were still in the form of a chest of drawers, surmounted by a glazed cupboard for books or china, and corresponded in shape to those of 1750, with the exception of the oblique writing-flap, which after this date was shaped like an ordinary drawer front, and let down by the means of two curved metal runners. A great many of these cabinets were made without any carving, except on the cornice and the framings to the glass, but it is not until after 1775 that they are found veneered



FIG. 44.—POLLARDED OAK WRITING-BUREAU. Height, 3 feet 2 inches ; length, 2 feet 4 inches ; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of S. CAMPBELL Cory, Esq.

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with the satin-wood that then became so fashionable. The low writing-bureau of earlier Georgian shape was also made in plain mahogany, and occasionally veneered with such woods as amboyna, maple, and pollarded oak, but very seldom with satin-wood. In the case of maple and oak, woods full of knots and veinings, an ebony stain was rubbed into the figure. This, when scraped, left a mottled yellow and black surface, somewhat resembling marble, that so disguises the character of the wood that many are puzzled by its appearance. Fig. 44 is one of these bureaux, of the shape so often made in mahogany, but here veneered with this artificially treated wood.

Chests of drawers are sometimes met with treated in this manner, and a barometer in the Guardroom of Hampton Court Palace is veneered with this stained wood. The most important form of furniture used for writing was still a table of pedestal shape. These were of mahogany, plain, except for the slight panel mouldings that were cornered with small round or oval pateræ of Adam design ; but as the taste for inlay succeeded that of carving, these tables, like all other furniture, were



FIG. 45.—INLAID WRITING-TABLE WITH METAL MOUNTINGS. Height, 2 feet 6 inches ; length, 6 feet ; depth, 3 feet 2 inches. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

sometimes carried to an elaborate degree of finish in that respect. Fig. 45 is an early example of 1768, designed by Adam, with a corresponding set of chairs and tables for the saloon at Osterley.

The top, covered with leather, and surrounded with a granulated banding of brass, is supported by tapering pilasters of rosewood, inlaid towards their bases with an acanthus leaf, and headed by openwork trusses of gilt brass, these frame drawers, and pedestal cupboards, veneered with sycamore, and inlaid with an open and classical design in delicately coloured woods; the pateræ at the corners of the panels are also of gilt brass.

On early specimens of this inlaid furniture the scale of the inlay is large, and the details are well defined: as the fashion proceeded, the ornament became smaller, more intricate, and the design more closely connected in its lines. Classical heads, full-length figures, broken columns and vases, were at first inlaid as centres to the surrounding marqueterie, which took the form of simple laurel wreaths, or a series of plain bandings in differently coloured woods; these very shortly developed at the hands of Adam, who was responsible for their first introduction into honeysuckled arabesques or foliated scrolls, springing from vases of fanned pateræ; borders of inlay surrounding these centres were copied from classical friezes; Etruscan vases, and Roman mosaics, rose, sycamore (hairwood), and satin-wood forming the usual background. When first stained, these inlays were so brilliant, that to an eye accustomed to their present faded condition, the original colour would almost seem crude.

It is somewhat surprising to find that Chippendale had in his old age adapted his taste to the new fashion, and that his firm carried out the inlaid furniture at Osterley and Harewood. Both houses owe their magnificent specimens to the happy combination of Robert Adam and Thomas Chippendale.

The library table (fig. 46), in many ways resembling the last example, represents this combination at its best. The top, 6 feet 10 inches

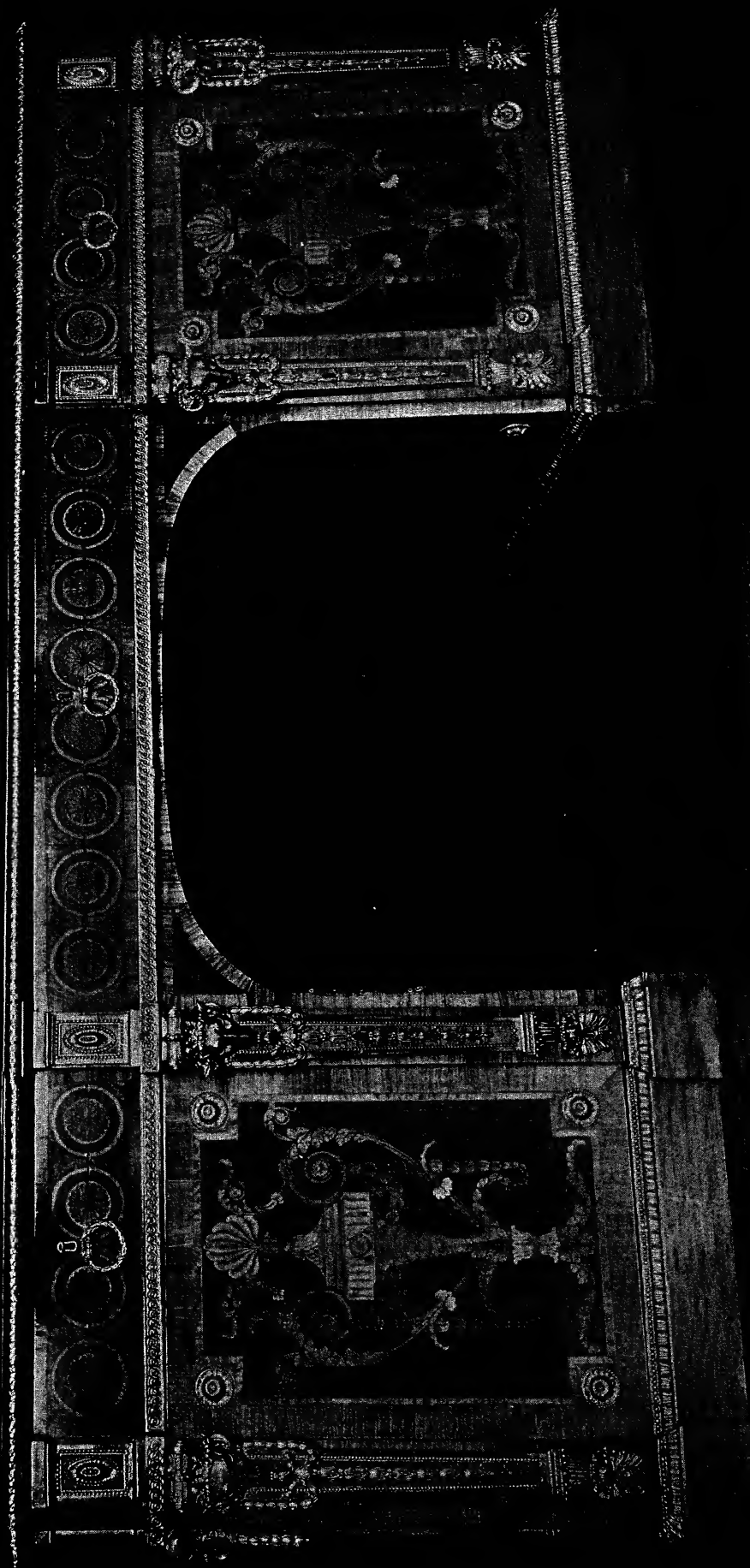


FIG. 46.—INLAID ROSEWOOD WRITING-TABLE WITH METAL MOUNTINGS.  
Height, 2 feet 9 inches; length, 6 feet 10 inches; depth, 4 feet. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

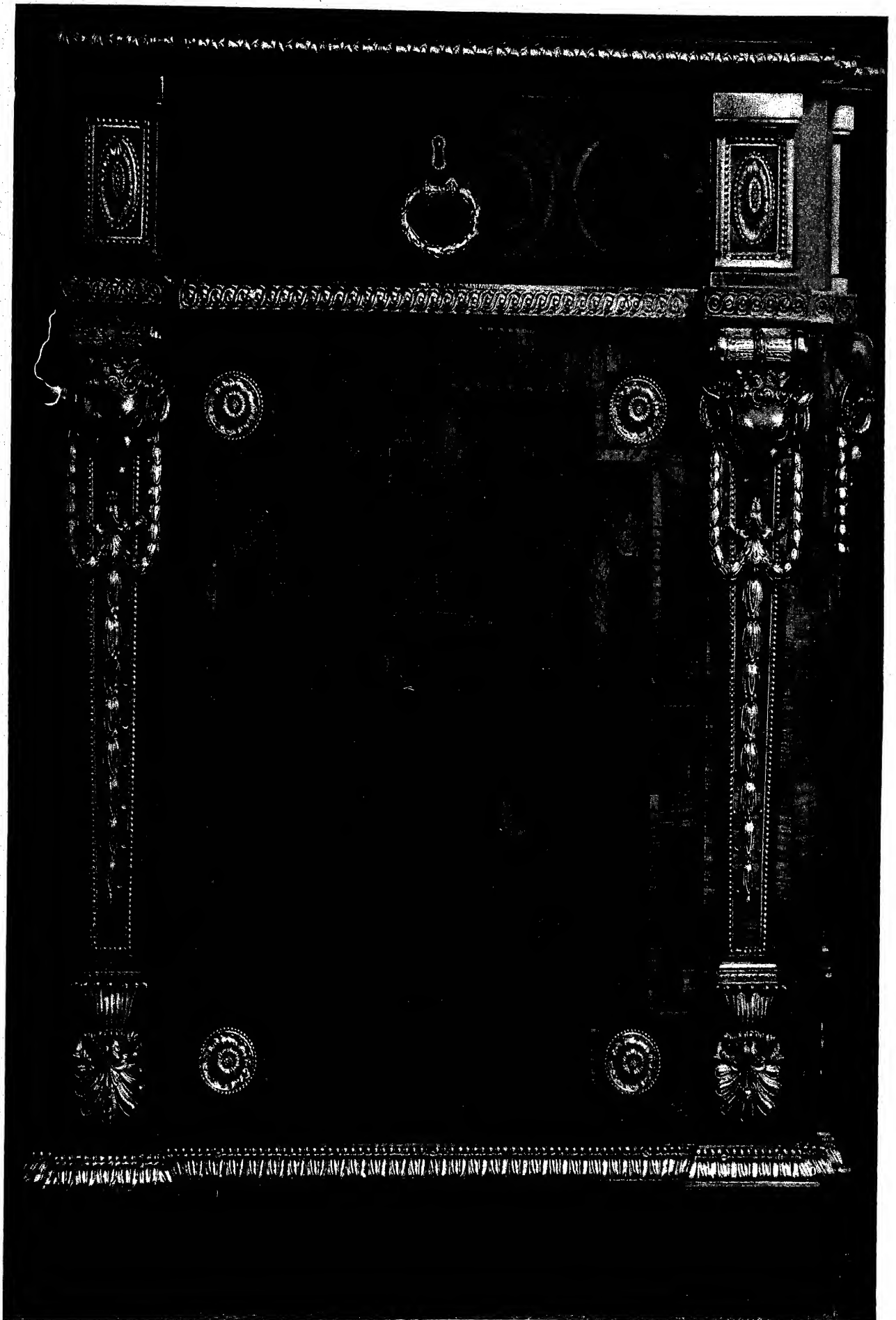


FIG. 47.—DETAIL OF DOOR OF INLAID WRITING-TABLE.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



FIG. 48.—END OF WRITING-TABLE. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



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in length, is covered with crimson morocco, to which age has given a fine deep tone; this is edged with a bold acanthus moulding in brass, and supported by a frieze inlaid with rose and green stained pearwood, the design shaded in great finish; the taper pilasters which decorate the front, back, and corners are headed by metal rams' heads from which hang garrya swags of the same fine cast and chased work. The doors (fig. 47) are inlaid with beautifully drawn vases and foliated ornaments of classical taste in holly and other stained woods, on a light rosewood ground, framed in bands of satin- and tulip-wood, and cornered with metal pateræ. The ends, one of which is given in fig. 48, are of similar finish. The whole scheme of this inlay and metal work is extremely beautiful and broad in effect, and though composed of so many various woods, the general tone of the table is now of a delicate fawn colour, forming a perfect harmony with the rich gold of the mountings; it is unlikely that any English inlaid furniture of higher quality was ever made.

Library furniture was evidently considered of great importance in well-appointed houses of this time. Mrs. Delany, whilst visiting Lord Bute in 1774, wrote to Bernard Granville as follows:—

‘You then go into the library, three or five rooms, one very large, one well proportioned in the middle, each end divided by pillars in which recesses are chimneys, and a large square room at each end, which, when the doors are thrown open, make it appear like one large room or gallery. I never saw so magnificent or so pleasant a library, extreamly well lighted, and nobly furnished with everything that can improve and entertain men of learning and virtue.’

A plain but very necessary piece of library furniture, folding up into the compass of a small table, is shown in fig. 49; these

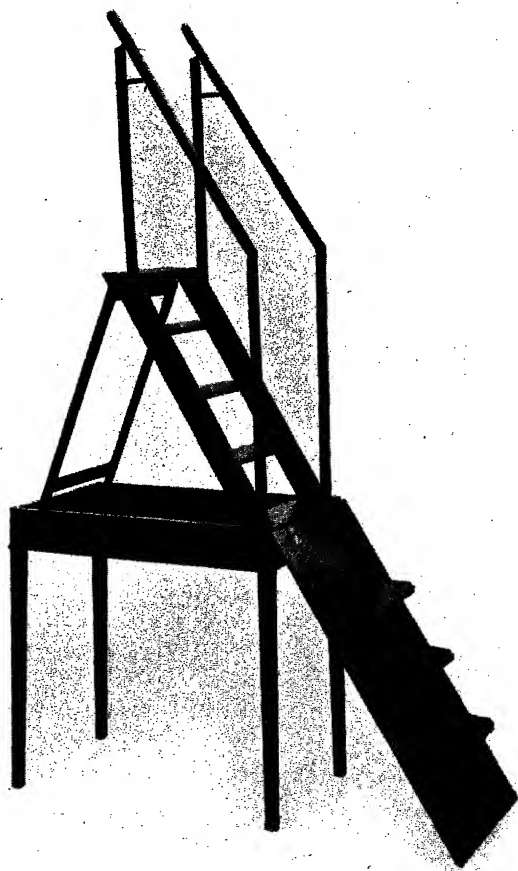


FIG. 49.—MAHOGANY LIBRARY STEPS.  
Property of PERCIVAL GRIFFITHS, Esq.

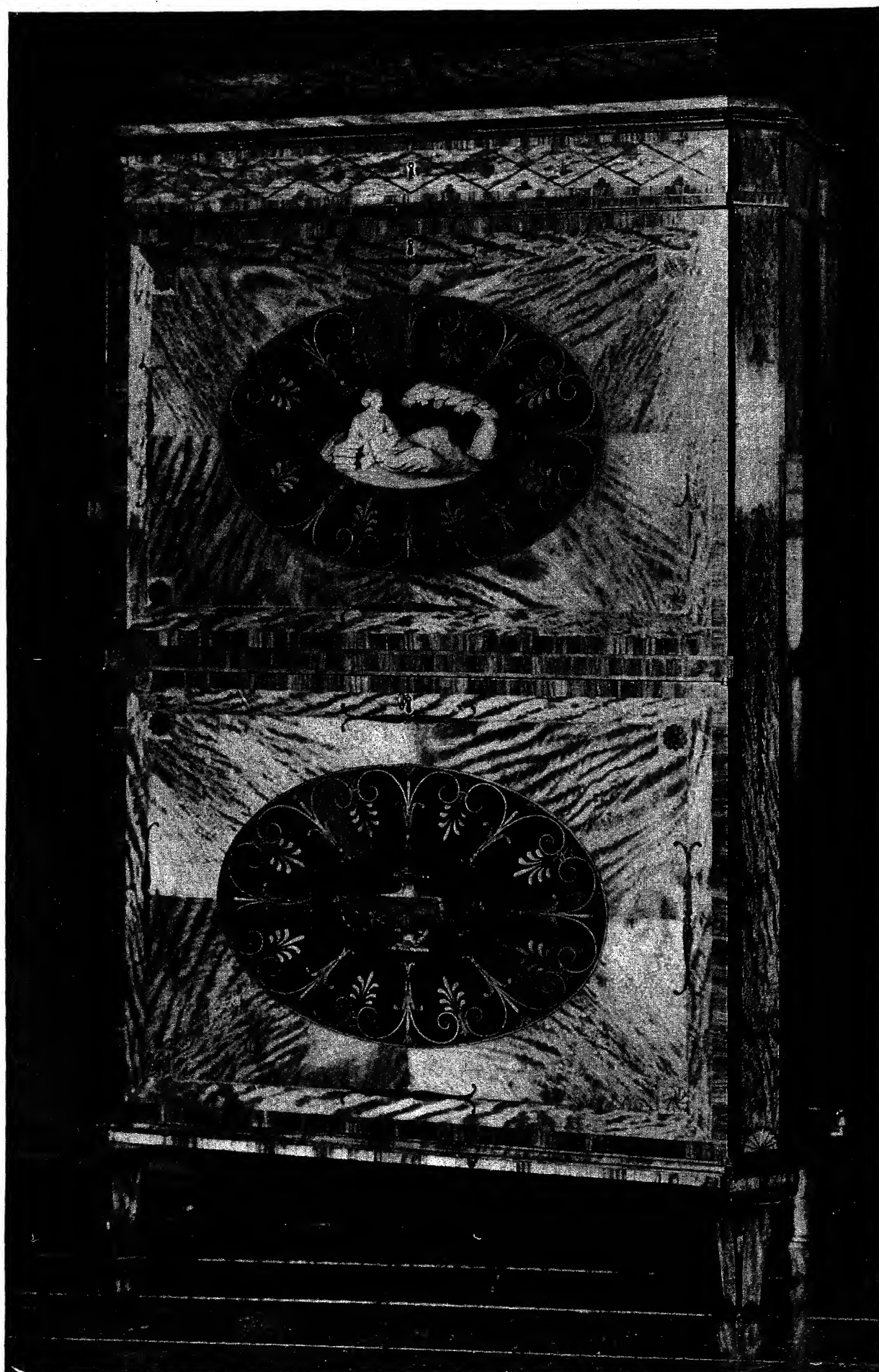


FIG. 50.—SATIN-WOOD AND INLAID COMMODE. Height, 4 feet 6 inches ; length, 2 feet 9 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

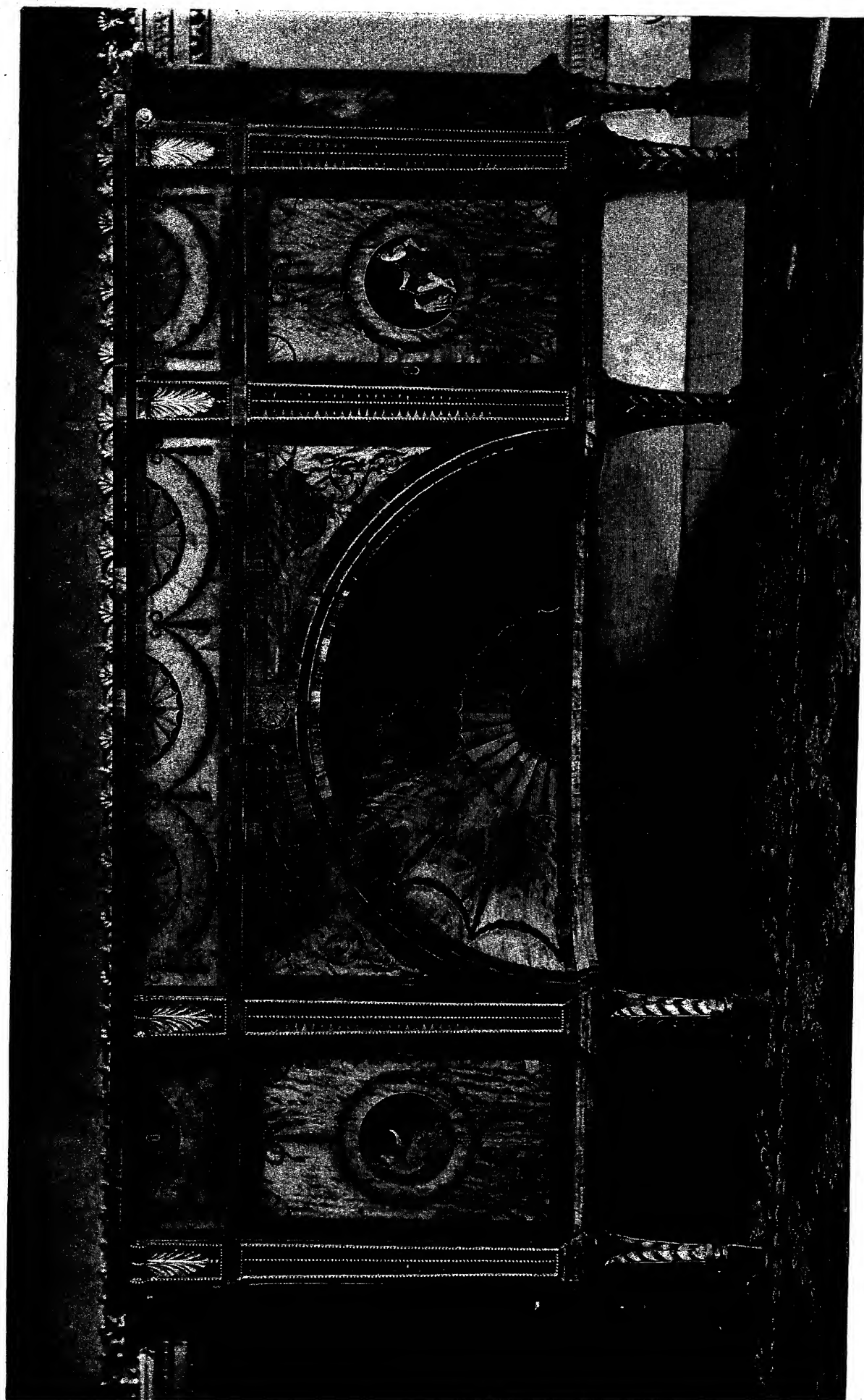


FIG. 51.—SATIN-WOOD INLAID DRESSING-COMMODE. Height, 3 feet 2 inches ; length, 7 feet 2 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

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steps are of mahogany, and though somewhat frail in appearance, make a perfectly reliable library ladder. Other forms of escritaires were adopted in the drawing-rooms and ladies' parlours. One of these, called in 1770 an upright writing-commode, is shown in fig. 50. The shape, almost a reversion to the walnut scrutoires of William and Anne, though common in France and Holland during the latter part of the eighteenth century, was not popular in England after 1720. This example forms part of a set of inlaid satin-wood furniture made for Harewood by Chippendale and designed by Adam, in 1773, and is fine in colour and execution; the introduction of the black oval panels on the writing-flap and cupboard door, inlaid with a recumbent figure and classical urn, are very effective, and the brilliant green of the surrounding inlay forms a beautiful contrast to the golden satin-wood ground. The shading and modelling to the ornaments and figures on all this inlaid furniture was produced by burning the surface of a light wood, such as pear, holly, or poplar, with hot sand—the gradation of tone being regulated by the depth of the deposit.

Perfection of design, skill, and finish can be seen in the dressing-table commode, fig. 51; the veneered ground is of the finest satin-wood, inlaid with an open design of swags and wreaths of once brilliant green garrya husks, now faded to a light olive; the wreaths frame seated figures of Minerva and Diana, inlaid in coloured woods and ivory on a black ground; carved satin-wood beadings run down the face of the pilasters, which are headed with gilt metal leaves, and terminate in round taper legs on which the metal leaves are repeated. The concave lunette forming the knee-hole is a masterpiece of cabinet-making, being composed of narrow mahogany staves shaped barrel-wise; on this curved surface the veneer and inlay has not moved since the piece was made, and the lustre in the satin-wood produce reflections similar to those seen on a golden or brass basin. This superb satin-wood commode was also designed by Adam for Harewood, and made by Chippendale and Haig in 1773.







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Some pages from a bill of this firm to Edwin Lascelles, Esqre., Lord Harewood's ancestor, are given in figs. 52, 53, and 54, and amongst the items mentioned is this piece of furniture :—

‘Nov. 12, 1773.—A vy large rich Commode with exceeding fine antique Ornaments curiously inlaid with various fine woods. Drawers at each End and enclosed with foldg Doors, with Diana and Minerva and their Emblems Curiously inlaid and Engraved a cupboard in the middle part with a Cove Door, a Dressing Drawer in the Top part, the whole Elegantly Executed and varnished, with many wrought Brass Antique ornaments finely finished, £86.’

To preserve the top a Damask Leather Cover was also supplied at £1.

Descriptions of furniture supplied by Chippendale in his bills leave nothing to be desired; he is quite aware of its excellence, and never loses an opportunity of enlarging on its merits. It may here be interesting to call attention to the next item on this account :—

‘A very large pier Glass, £290.’

This would represent about £800 of our current money, and shows the great cost of very large sheets of glass in those days, for this sum does not include the frame, described as

‘A superb Frame to ditto, with very large antique ornaments exceeding richly Carved and highly finished in burnished Gold,’

and charged separately at £70. Although these bills prove that Chippendale was veneering with satin-wood very soon after its introduction in 1765, when it was ordinarily used as an inlay, it is more than surprising to find these elaborate effects of inlaid satin-wood furniture, which are generally attributed to Sheraton, brought to such perfection twenty years before his arrival in London. Sheraton, in his *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803, alludes to the use of this wood for the past twenty years, but does not recognise the achievements of earlier masters in this style. It is therefore probable that Chippendale and his firm led the taste in satin-wood as they had already dictated the fashions in mahogany, and that much of



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the originality in inlaid furniture, attributed to other makers, is due to Chippendale and his connection with Adam.

Satin-wood is cut from the tree *Chloroxylon swietenia*. The best comes from Central and South India, is short and broad in the figure, and with age attains a brilliant warm yellow. It is extremely hard, and gives out a curious aromatic scent when scraped. East India satin-wood was generally used upon all the finest furniture; that cut in the West Indies is paler, although more distinct and horizontal in figure, but possesses neither the same lustre nor value as the former wood. Tulip-wood was much used in conjunction with satin-wood, and generally formed the bandings and borders to inlaid furniture. It was applied on the cross, and when new, is distinctly pink in colour.

Zebra-wood, cut from the *Connarus guianensis*, comes from British Guiana, and is also much used for borders and bandings; it is a light yellow brown wood with dark vertical lines which almost give the appearance of a zebra stripe. Kingwood is a darker and redder wood of the same character, a species of *Dalbergia*, and marked with fine lines of a darker colour.

The green-stained wood, so much in favour as an inlay for garrya husks and leaves during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century, was beech or pear stained to a brilliant colour by an oxide of copper. This has now faded to pale olive tones, but the original brilliance of colour can be discovered by scraping the surface with a knife.

Harewood, or hairwood, is the same cutting of sycamore as that used in the manufacture of violins, and consequently termed fiddleback. This was stained an ashen grey, which, with age, became somewhat golden in colour.

Amboyna, a species of *Pterocarpus*, is a wood full of eyes and knots, much resembling bird's-eye maple, but of smaller and closer figure; the colour is a reddish brown, and furniture veneered with this wood was highly prized. In conjunction with these, walnut, yew, holly, pear,

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laburnum, cherry, ebony, rose, and other woods were used for the different inlays that were considered so important in this late Georgian school of furniture.

A good example of plain East India satin-wood is shown in the lady's writing-cabinet (fig. 55) mounted upon taper legs. This is entirely dependent for its decorative charm on the lustre of the veneer and perfect simplicity of its shape. It is interesting as an early and quiet example of the delicate and somewhat effeminate furniture that prevailed towards the end of the century, a period producing much that was graceful and charming, but at times trivial, and tinctured with a sentimental prettiness which formerly had been unknown.

It is unwise to assign an individual maker to such a piece, but it is probable that Seddon was making a great deal of fashionable furniture as early as 1770. Some writers have placed the work of this firm at a later date, but the following passage from the *Annual Register* for 1768 proves their mistake :—

‘A dreadful fire burnt down London House, formerly the residence of the Bishops of London, in Aldersgate Street, now occupied by Mr. Seddon, one of the most eminent cabinet-makers in London. The damage is computed at £20,000.’

This sum represents about £60,000 of our current money, a large and valuable stock-in-trade for a maker to hold whose furniture is not even called after his name, and who must have been contemporary with Chippendale. In spite of the many similar and important firms of cabinet-makers turning out quantities of work in London about 1770, the furnishing of small country-houses was still scanty, and it can be seen from the following details of domestic country life that luxuries in middle-class life had increased there but little since the time of Anne. Gardiner, in *Music and Friends*, states that but ‘few houses in the country possessed harpsichords and spinets, and that so late as 1782 no more than three such instruments existed in the town and neighbourhood of Leicester.’ In Cowper's correspondence he mentions that a table, a looking-glass, and

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a few chairs constituted the furniture of an ordinary country parlour, that easy-chairs were still very, very far from common, and that clocks in such a household were limited to one eight-day that stood in a corner of the principal sitting-room, or very often a cuckoo clock that hung upon the wall.

On the mantelpiece of such rooms stood two brass candlesticks, with a pair of snuffers on a tray side by side with a tinder and flint. Box-beds in some of the rooms were still largely used, the air being carefully excluded from their occupants during the night by means of sliding doors. Roasting-jacks were a luxury, and such cooking was done by spits, the wheels being turned by a servant or by a dog trained for the purpose.

W. Sydney, in *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century*, states that even towards the end of the century cooks were often to be seen running about the city of Wells eagerly inquiring for their dogs that had forsaken the spits. Wooden platters and trenchers were used in most households by the young people and servants. Large joints of meat were favourite dishes amongst all classes. Geese, ducks, and poultry of all kinds and ham were considered luxuries. About 1780 the customary dinner-hour in good country families was two o'clock; wine was never placed upon the table during dinner, as beer was the general drink. Cock-fighting formed a very general subject for conversation after dinner amongst country gentlemen, and the birds being sent for and placed upon the dinner-table, a cock-fight would ensue.

The furniture of dining-rooms, even in large town and country houses, all through the eighteenth and greater part of the nineteenth centuries, was confined to a table, chairs, and sideboard-table. These sideboard-tables, after 1750, were sometimes flanked on either side by separate pedestal cupboards. A little later the pedestals were united to the table, forming one piece of furniture, called a pedestal sideboard, which in turn gave way to the well-known form flanked on either side by drawers or cupboards, and standing upon taper legs.

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In the two first varieties the pedestals were often surmounted by vases of classical form, carved or inlaid to match the table; these were lined with lead; Hepplewhite in his *Guide*, published some years later, says: 'These vases may be used to hold water for the use of the butler, or iced water for drinking, which is enclosed in an inner partition, the ice surrounding it. Pedestals are much used in spacious dining-rooms: one pedestal serves as a plate warmer, being provided with racks and a stand for heater; the other pedestal is used for other purposes.' The vases were sometimes divided into compartments to hold knives, forks, and spoons, which, being very limited in number, were often washed in the room.

The sideboard-tables and pedestals of Adam were at first comparatively plain and severe. Occasionally very elaborate specimens were made for exceptional clients, such as the beautiful sideboard, pedestals, vases, and wine-cooler, designed by Adam and carried out by Chippendale for the dining-room at Harewood in 1770. The top of this



FIG. 56.—ROSEWOOD INLAID SIDEBOARD-TABLE AND WINE-COOLER WITH METAL MOUNTS. Height, 2 feet 9 inches; length, 6 feet 6 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

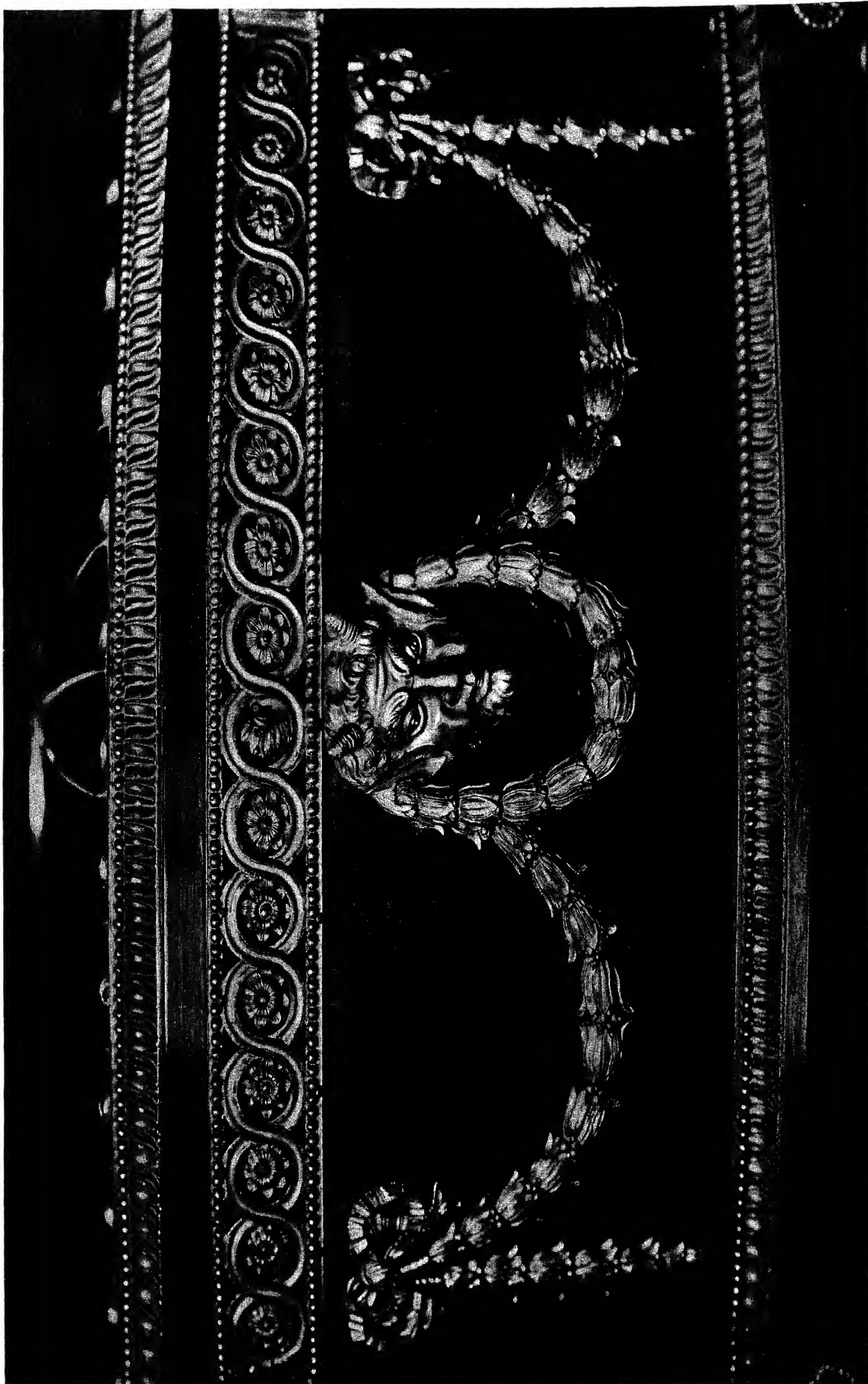


FIG. 57.—DETAIL OF WINE-COOLER. Height, 2 feet 3 inches; length, 2 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

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sideboard (fig. 56) is of light rosewood edged with brass and inlaid with a broad rectangular banding of tulip-wood surrounding an oval of fanned ornament; on the rosewood frame beneath this is applied, on rosewood, a frieze of floriated and open scroll-work of brass in high relief; the legs, of rosewood veneered on the cross, are headed with pateræ and bold garrya swags also cast and chased in brass. The feet are top-shaped and finished in brass.

Underneath the table stands an oval wine-cooler; its detail is shown in fig. 57. This also is of rosewood, enriched with bandings, festoons, and satyrs' masks, all of gilt brass; on either side of the table are pedestals, surmounted by vases of solid rosewood mounted with metal in a similar manner. Fig. 58 represents one of these, and in fig. 59 detail of the pedestal is given, in order that the exact arrangement of the inlay and surprising excellence of the brass-work can be appreciated. The modelling of these mountings is so large and full of spirit, that it even surpasses in style the work of the contemporary Frenchman, Gouthière. The furniture just mentioned has hitherto been described as of mahogany, but the rosewood is so faded, that the mistake is almost excusable. There is no means of ascertaining the original cost of such work, for the bills of Chippendale, 1773, preserved at Harewood, do not mention this furniture, but there is a balance of three thousand pounds brought forward from a former account, that probably included these items.

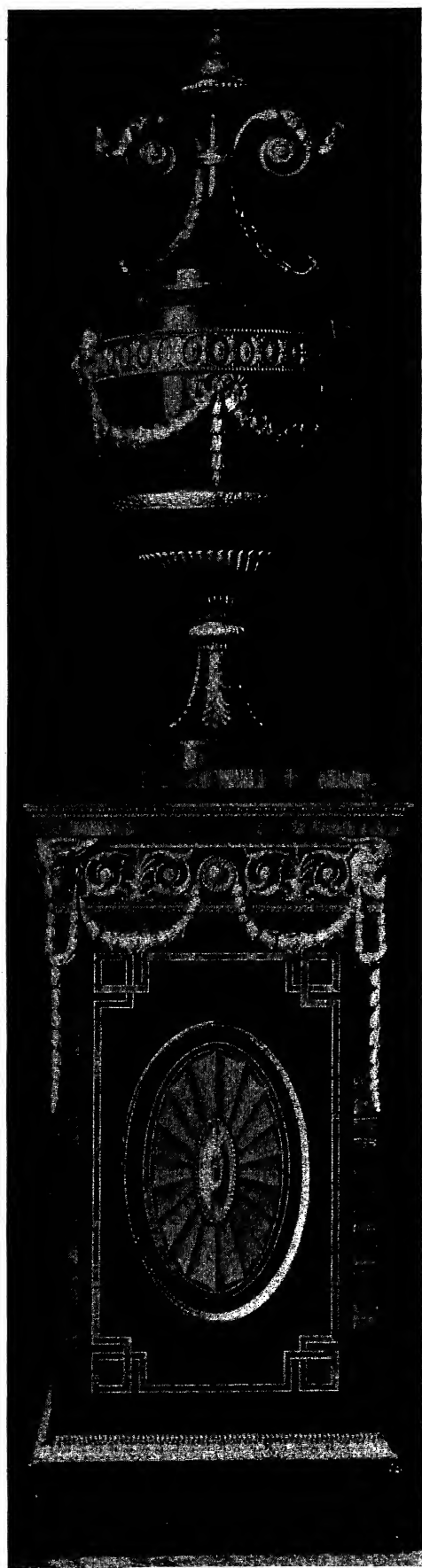


FIG. 58.—ROSEWOOD INLAID SIDEBOARD  
PEDESTAL AND URN WITH METAL  
MOUNTINGS. Height (in all), 6 feet.  
Pedestal, 1 foot 6 inches square.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.





FIG. 59.—DETAIL OF SIDEBOARD PEDESTAL. Height, 2 feet 11 inches; 1 foot 6 inches square. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



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The sideboard pedestal (fig. 60), one of a pair from Burghley, is about six years earlier in date than the preceding examples, and represents Adam at his best as a designer for carving. They correspond in style and execution to the library table at Nostell, and were probably made by Chippendale at the same time. The vase, of most remarkable finish, is in direct imitation of a Roman cinerary urn, but the handles are composed of the foliated C scrolls of 1755. The carving of the rams' heads and central trophy on the pedestal is superb, the hard Cuban mahogany giving a fine quality to the work. The sideboard-table that originally accompanied these magnificent pedestals is unfortunately now missing, but the small hole at the base of the vases shows that a tap was inserted here to drain off the ice-water, and therefore proves that they formed the accompaniment to a large sideboard.

It is unnecessary to give plain examples of these tables and separate pedestals, for they but repeat the structure and arrangement of the ornamented varieties; they are always of mahogany, and decorated with but little carving.

Fig. 61, from Hardwick, explains the next evolution in sideboards, for in this instance the leg and corner of a long sideboard-table has been actually

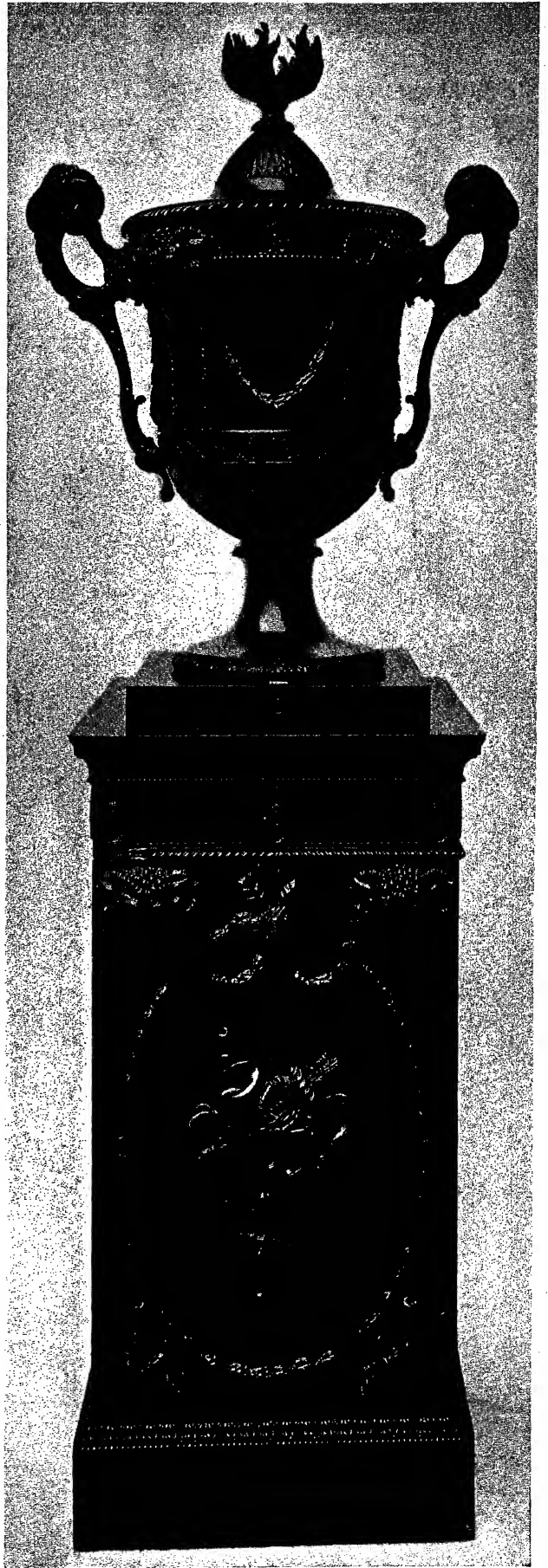


FIG. 60.—MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD PEDESTAL AND URN. Property of the MARQUESS OF EXETER.



FIG. 61.—MAHOGANY INLAID SIDEBOARD-TABLE WITH URNS AND PEDESTALS.  
Property of the DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

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cut away to admit the pedestals. These and the table are of plain mahogany, inlaid with the same wood of a lighter colour. The vases are ornamented with a plain inlay and fluting, and retain their taps for drawing off the water.

A pedestal sideboard of ordinary Adam type (fig. 62) possesses interest—being made of deal; it was probably made for the steward's room, where it now stands. The heading and the oak top are a later addition. Pedestal sideboards, inlaid with isolated full-length figures in arched panels, are generally the work of George Hepplewhite, who died in London in 1786, and obtained much celebrity as a designer of cabinets, settees, and chairs; his work, though at times original, is hard and plain, lacking the delicate refinement of Adam, Chippendale, and Sheraton. Fig. 63 is an unusually ornate and elaborate specimen by this maker. The table-front is concave, opening in one long drawer inlaid with delicate swags of garrya, but the beauty of the piece consists in the well drawn, stained, and inlaid figures on the pedestal doors. The draperies to these are in deep reds and greens, the faces and limbs being admirably modelled by burning on a light wood. The figures are set in arched panels of sycamore, surrounded by bands of tulip-wood on a ground of mahogany; at the back is a low gallery of brass, which gives great finish to the top, and behind this is a plain brass curtain rail, often introduced at this time. In fig. 64, of about the same date, 1780, the front is serpentine, and the pedestals divided into three drawers; the carved garrya pendants decorating the corners have lost the fat, round character found in earlier work, and have almost degenerated into a string of tassels. The introduction of the marqueterie shell into the channelled frieze, the spandrels of the arched opening and the inner shelf, infer that the sideboard is late for one of pedestal shape, as this style went somewhat out of fashion towards the end of the century, and was not revived until about 1800.

In the well-known type of sideboard generally associated with the

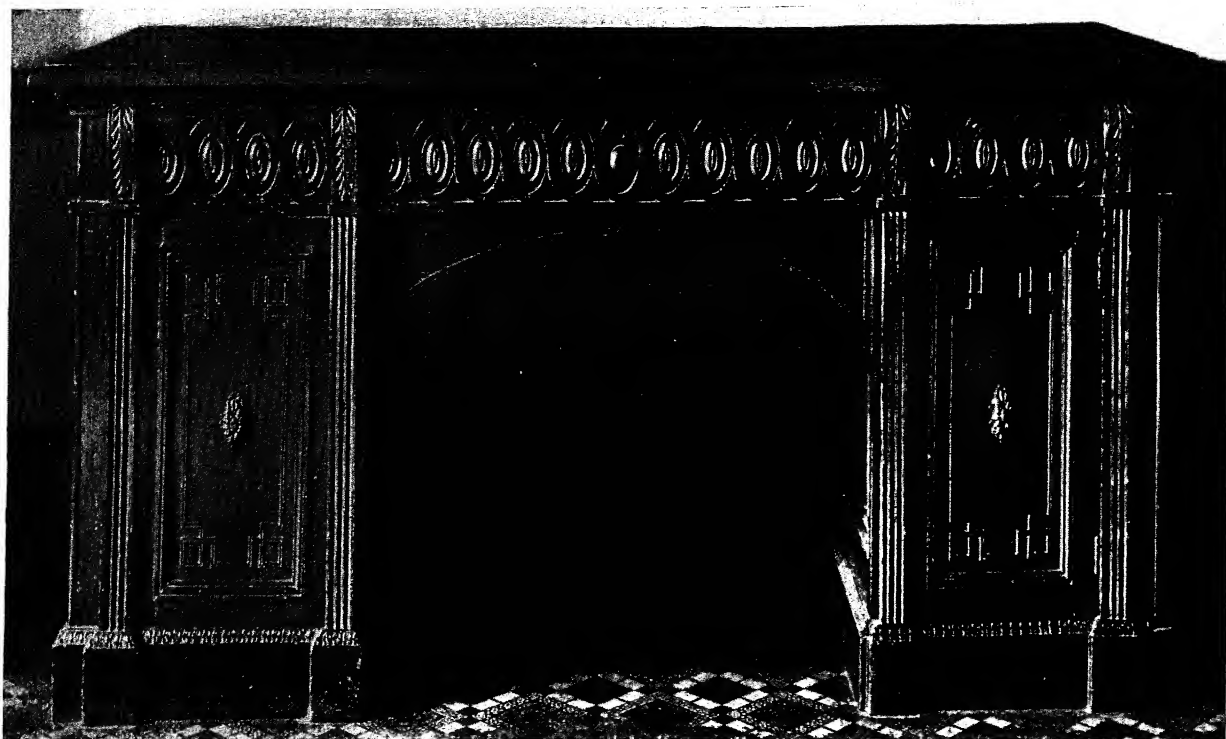


FIG. 62.—PAINTED DEAL PEDESTAL SIDBOARD. Height, 2 feet 9 inches; length, 6 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

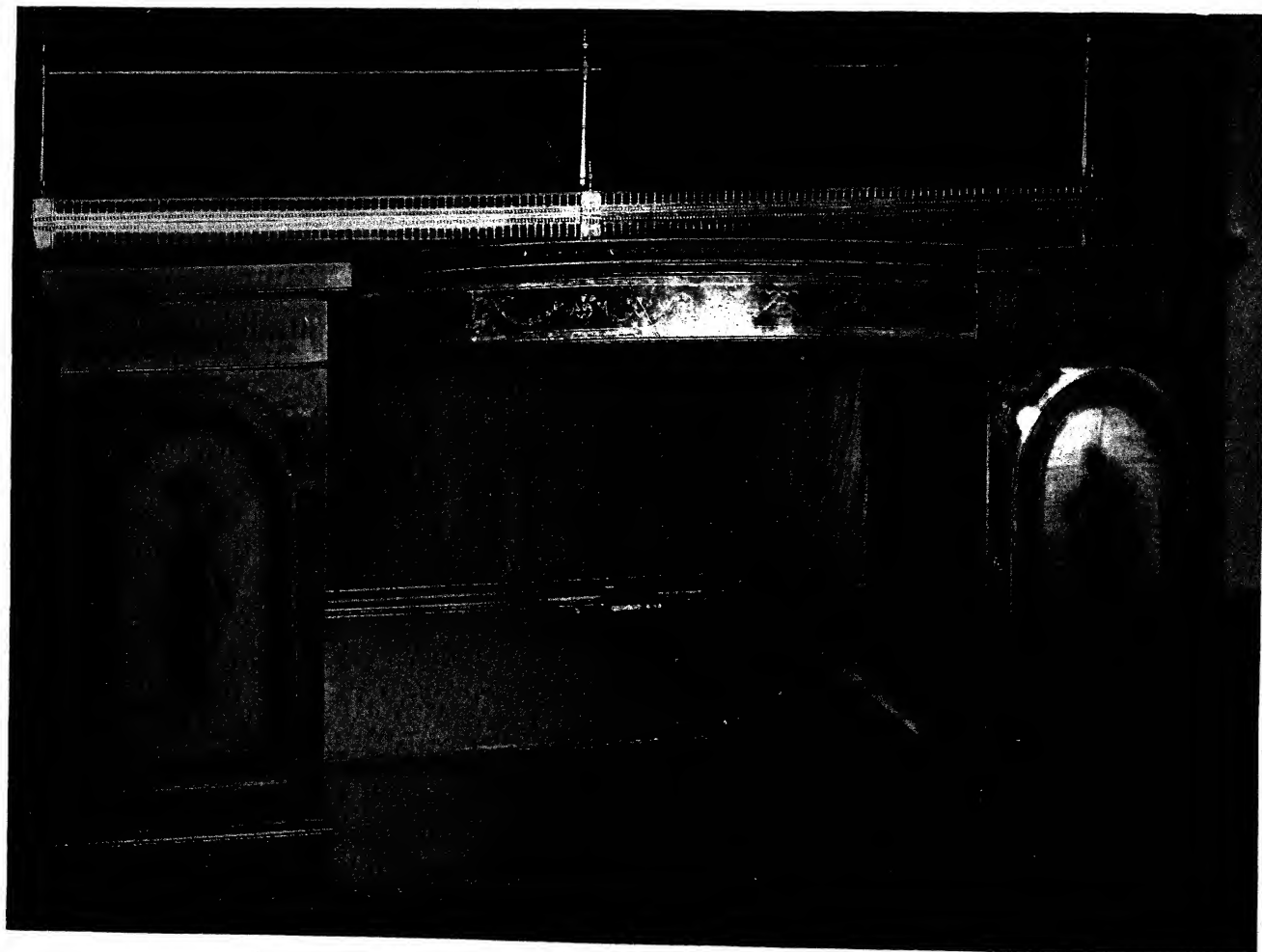


FIG. 63.—INLAID PEDESTAL SIDBOARD. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 7 feet.  
Property of A. HALL, Esq.



FIG. 64.—MAHOGANY INLAID PEDESTAL SIDEBOARD.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.



FIG. 65.—MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD. Height, 3 feet ; length, 5 feet 6 inches.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.

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last quarter of the eighteenth century, the pedestals were curtailed and took the form of drawers, or cupboard doors enclosing drawers, supported by taper legs. The earliest specimens are of Adam design, with fluted legs, generally headed by an oval patera; the frame and drawer in some instances being decorated with applied swags of fine carving. Fig. 65 is simple, but of good proportion; the drawers uniting the well-fluted legs are not sufficiently deep to contain bottles; a wine-cooler, or oval box for wine, such as fig. 66, would also have accompanied the early sideboards of this shape, and filled the rather vacant space beneath the table, for a certain empty coldness and severity pervades the whole piece, representative of the feeling that is to be found in tables of this new school.

The brass handles used on furniture after 1770 often repeated the rounds and ovals of the inlay or the carving of the pateræ. An interesting sideboard in two tiers, of Hepplewhite design, is shown in fig. 67. The front of both these tiers is serpentine, the ornament being limited to fine



FIG. 66.—MAHOGANY WINE-COOLER.  
Property of R. EDEN DICKSON, Esq.



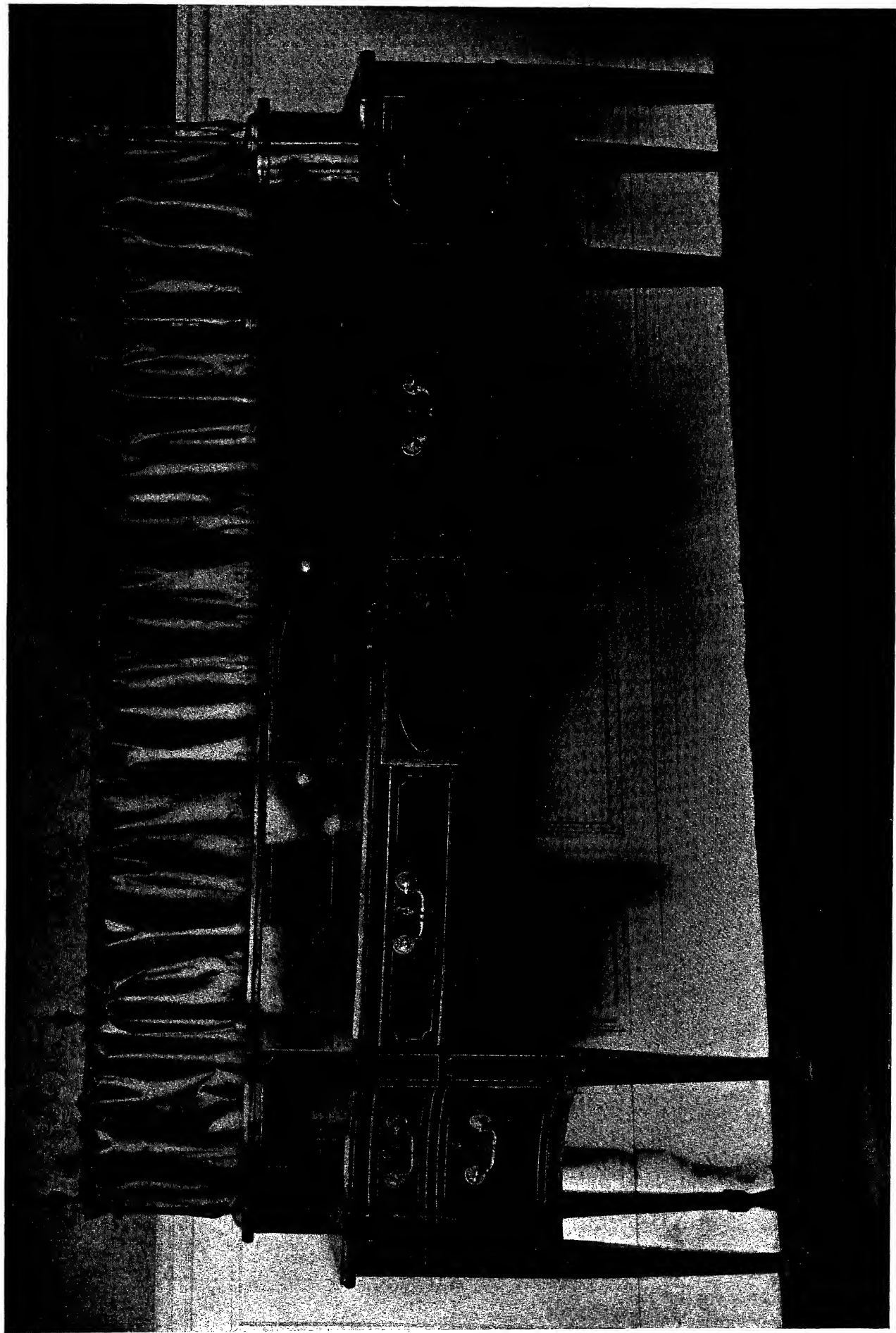


FIG. 67.—MAHOGANY INLAID SIDBOARD. Height, 3 feet 7 inches. Property of L. FLEISCHMANN, Esq.



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lines of light wood on a mahogany ground ; the feet repeat the motive found upon Chippendale china tables of lattice-work design.

Another and rather later specimen of this maker (fig. 68) repeats the serpentine front, but the entire surface is veneered with satin-wood, the plain legs being relieved with long, sunk panels ; it is unusual to find sideboards entirely of satin-wood before the time of Sheraton. In this example, the wood, although East Indian, is pale in colour, the bandings and flutings being of tulip-wood. George Hepplewhite, who established the business of Hepplewhite and Co., died in 1786, his book of designs for furniture, *The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer's Guide*, being published in 1788 ; his position as a cabinet-maker was therefore well established by the year 1775, and from the great quantity of furniture produced by his firm and his followers, it is probable that the name of Hepplewhite carried almost as great a weight with the public as that of Chippendale, although the productions of the former were never so ambitious, nor did they attain the variety and great perfection shown in the work of the latter master. It is only when we see Chippendale, at the age of sixty, departing from his original style, and adapting his work to the new fashions, that his versatility is realised.

The carving of Hepplewhite is delicate and his inlay careful, but both are lacking in life and spontaneity ; the finish is admirable and the construction of his furniture scientific in its lightness and durability, but the results are seldom unexpected.

In Plate iv. the decoration takes the form of plain inlaid and finely figured satin-wood panels, the front is elliptical and beneath the centre drawer, the arch and its spandrels open as a lower drawer, this addition being found in sideboards after 1780. The brass rail at the back centres in two candle branches of careful execution, which with the original extinguisher are intact. The general simplicity of design and delicate proportions of this piece, combined with its careful internal construction, suggest the work of Thomas Shearer, a contemporary of Hepplewhite,

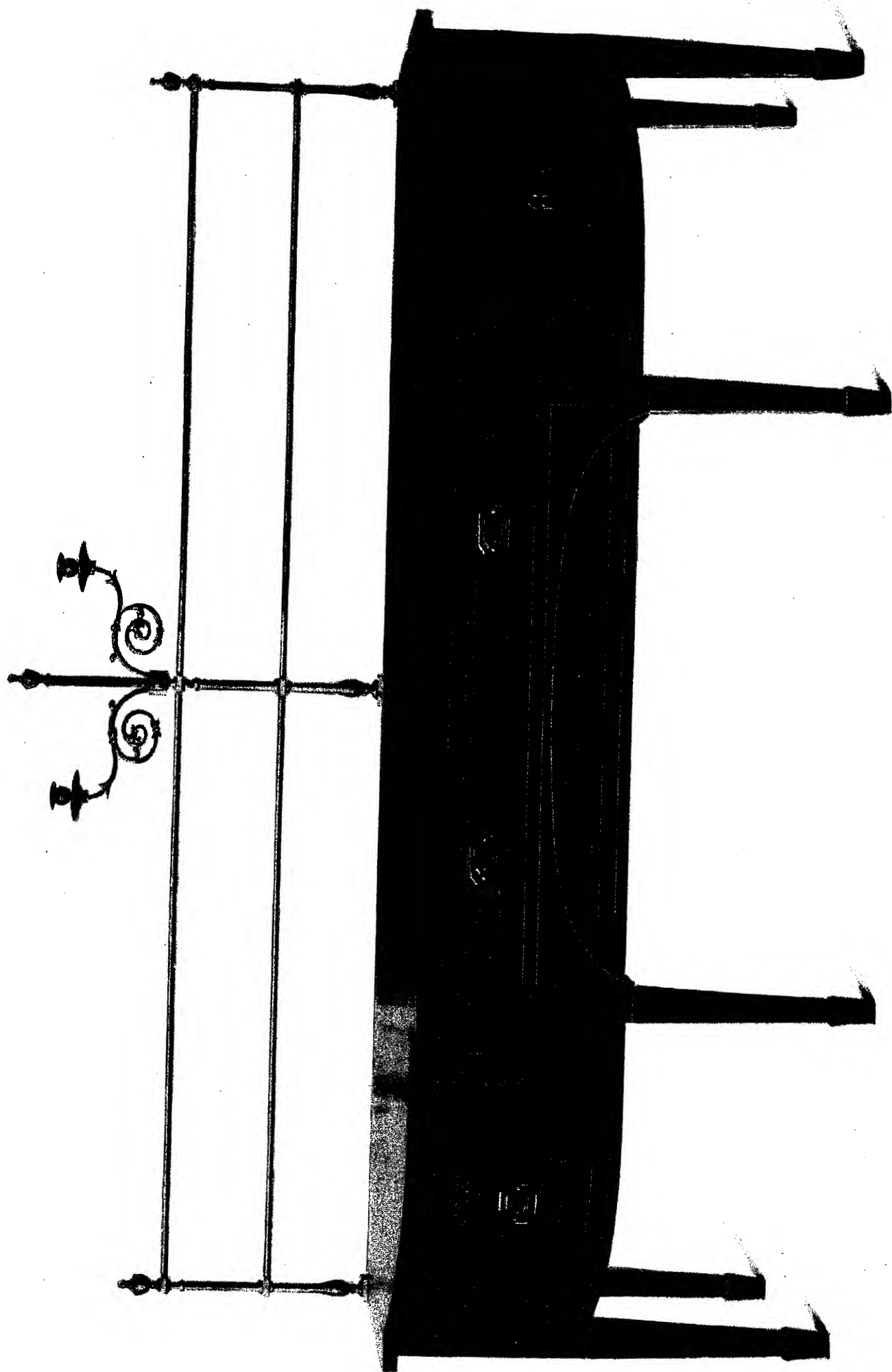
PLATE IV (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

SATINWOOD AND MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD

HEIGHT (TO TOP OF BRASS-WORK), 5 FEET 7 INCHES  
LENGTH . . . . . 6 " 11 "  
DEPTH . . . . . 2 " 7 "

PROPERTY OF  
PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.







# ENGLISH FURNITURE

and responsible for most of the designs in *The Cabinet-maker's London Book of Prices and Designs of Cabinet-work*, 1788.

Sometimes these sideboards were made with rounded backs, to fit the curved recesses so much favoured by Adam and his followers in the decoration of rooms, or where the recess was square the piece often filled the entire width. Fig. 69 is probably one of these very long sideboards, its length being no less than sixteen feet. It is of the same character as Plate iv., but in this case the cupboard fronts are veneered with clouded mahogany on a satin-wood ground, the spandrels to the three arches being also of the latter wood. The legs show the extremely taper proportions introduced after 1780.

The semi-circular shape of fig. 70, its general lightness of proportion,

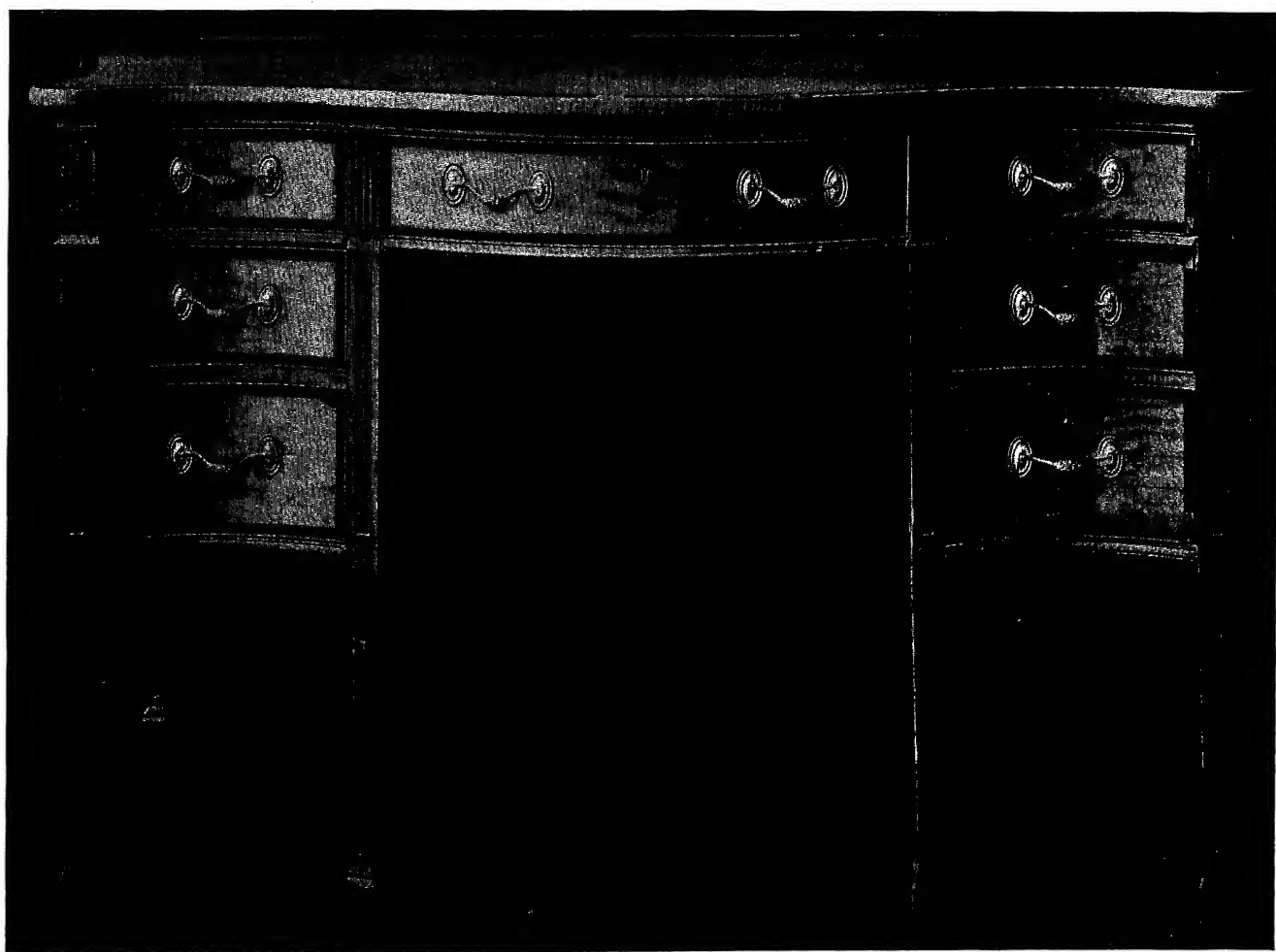


FIG. 68.—SATIN-WOOD SIDEBOARD. Height, 3 feet; length, 5 feet.  
Property of MESSRS. GILL AND REIGATE.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

and the tasteful arrangement of its decoration, is generally attributed to Sheraton, but as this designer and cabinet-maker did not come to London until about 1790, it is difficult to imagine this sideboard is of quite so late a date. The ground is of finely chosen mahogany, the borders, frame, and legs being inlaid with buff and light-brown woods. The spandrels to the arch are wide and inlaid with large fans. Underneath this is a movable shelf which can be placed in position when required. The waved framing to the lower drawers, and the small ovals inlaid with flowers that head the legs, show that the piece is certainly after 1785. Hepplewhite describing these sideboards, states: 'That the drawer on the left hand should have two divisions, the hinder one lined with green cloth, to hold plate, etc., under a cover; the front one is lined with lead for the convenience of holding water to wash glasses, etc.; there must be a valve cock or plug at the bottom, to let off the dirty water, and also in the other drawer to change the water necessary to keep the wine cool. The long drawer in the middle is adapted for table-linen.'

These graceful sideboards continued to be made until about 1805, developing a still lighter construction, with rounded taper legs and elaborate inlay. They were replaced by an altogether heavier type, and finally reverted back to the pedestal sideboard of massive mahogany.

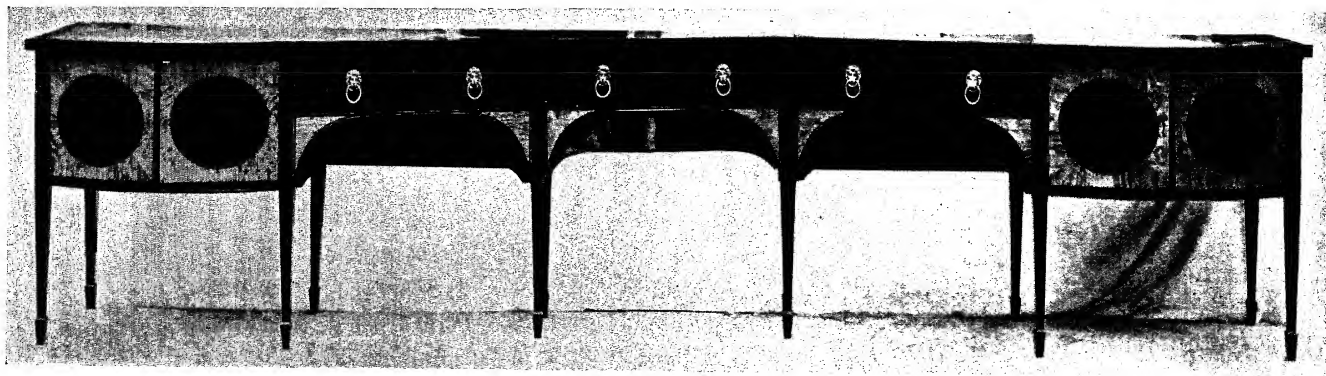


FIG. 69.—MAHOGANY AND SATIN-WOOD SIDEBOARD. Length, 16 feet.  
Property of S. WARING, Esq.



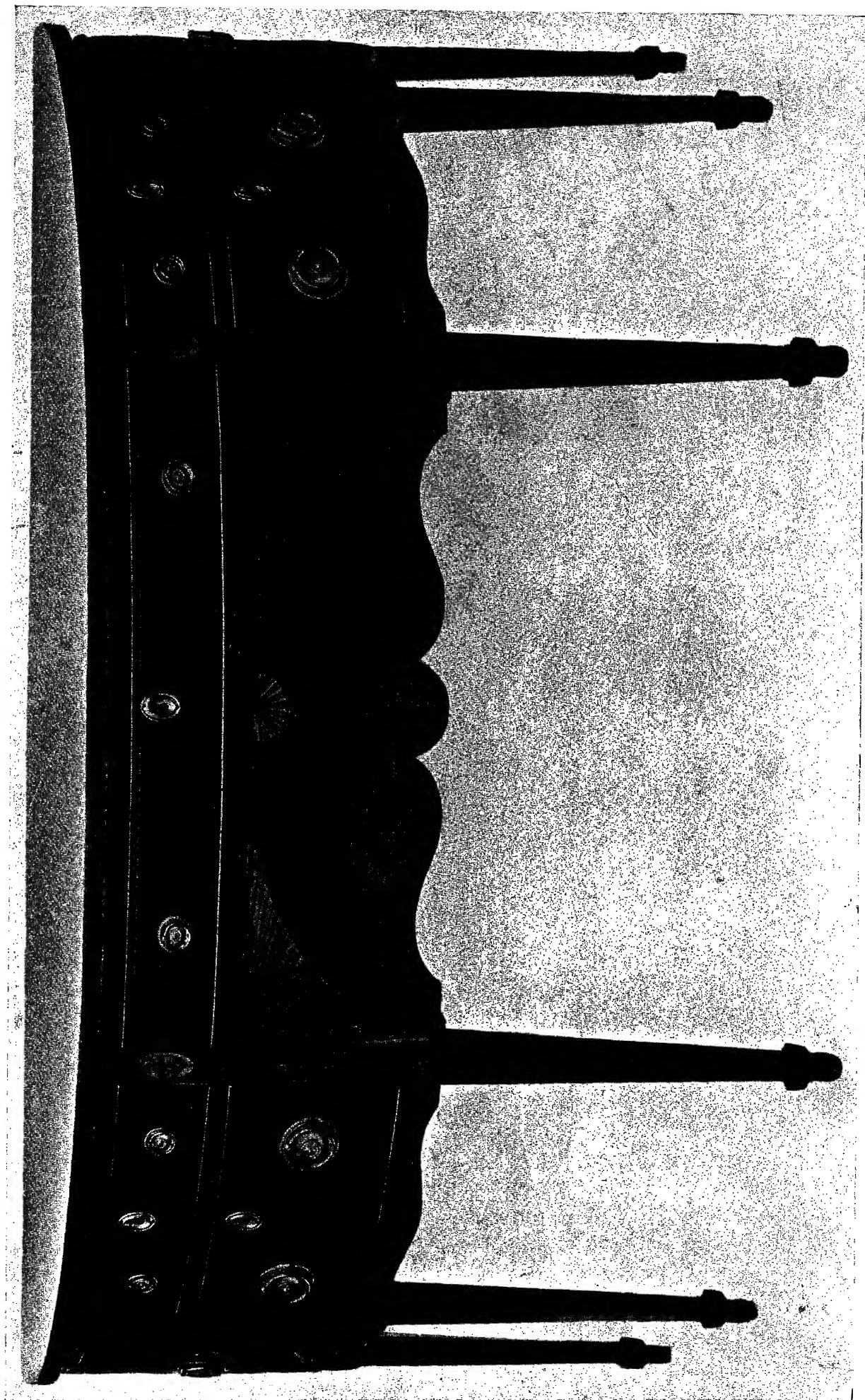


FIG. 70.—INLAID MAHOGANY SIDEBOARD. Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.

## CHAPTER III



SIDE-TABLES for the dining-room accompanied the side-boards, both being used for the display of plate and other necessities of the meal. The various dishes of food were placed upon the table and helped by those nearest to them, a custom that prevailed until after the middle of the nineteenth century. The design of fig. 71 is rich though simple, every portion of the serpentine front is decorated in the early style of the new fashion, the urn with its well-defined garlands that forms the centre panel is effectively carved, and the frieze of serrated palm leaves gives a great sense of richness and repose; the flutings to the taper legs are without stops, details probably omitted to carry out the narrow perpendicular effect of the leaves above; the top is plain, and made in one thick piece of Cuban mahogany. Fig. 72 is of the same character, but still more severe, and so good in its proportions and execution, as to suggest the combined work of Adam and Chippendale; here also the entire surface is carved on classical lines, the mouldings and honeysuckle pateræ heading the legs being of the highest finish. In this instance the flutings on the legs are stopped, the space being outlined with a leaf pattern; the feet are bold and square, and give a good classical finish to the legs. The channelled frieze to this table has at some time been cut to form drawers, a circumstance much detracting from its beauty, and a piece of vandalism of by no means uncommon occurrence. The date of both these examples is about 1765.

In fig. 73, the style is transitional, the taste of the sprays and ribbon preceding in period the innovations of Adam, represented by the legs and their pateræ. The carving is free and vigorous, its open character

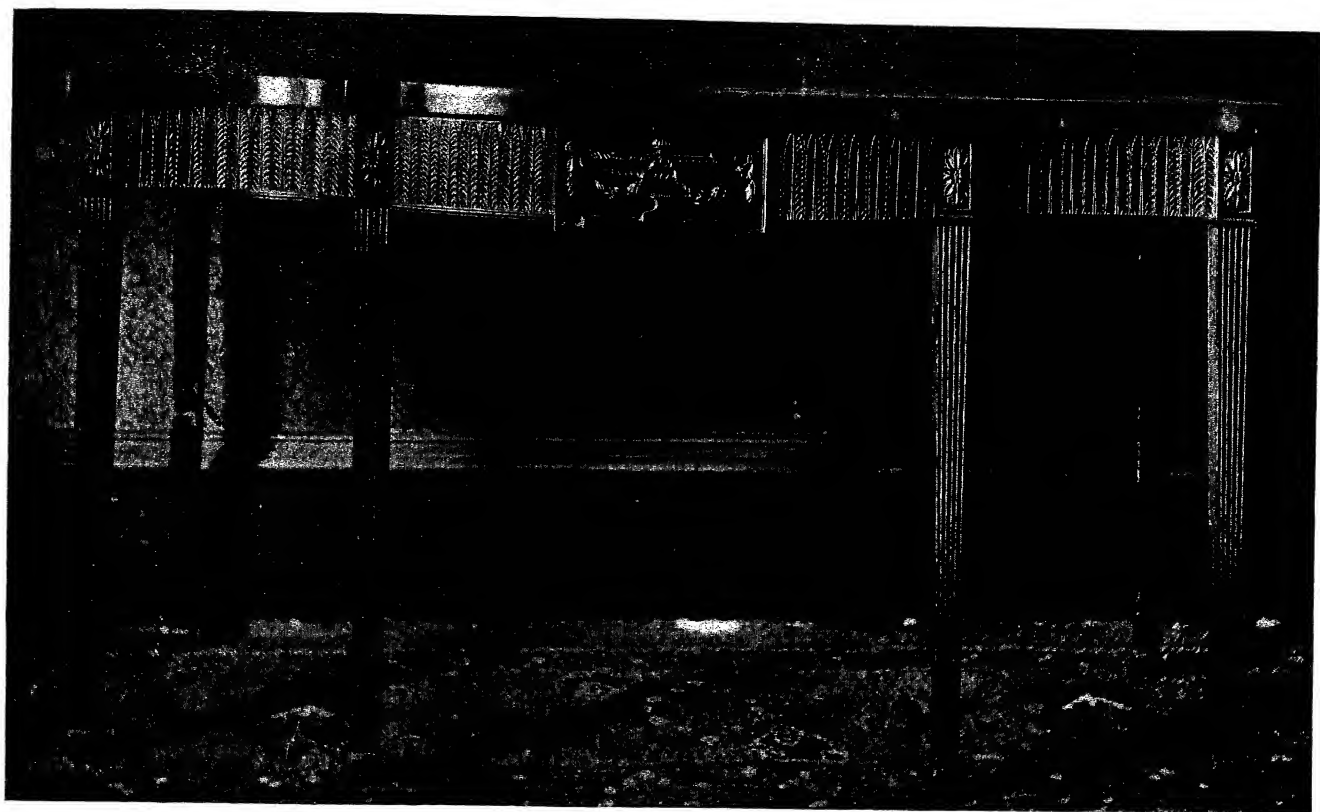


FIG. 71.—MAHOGANY SIDE-TABLE. . Property of A. HALL, Esq.

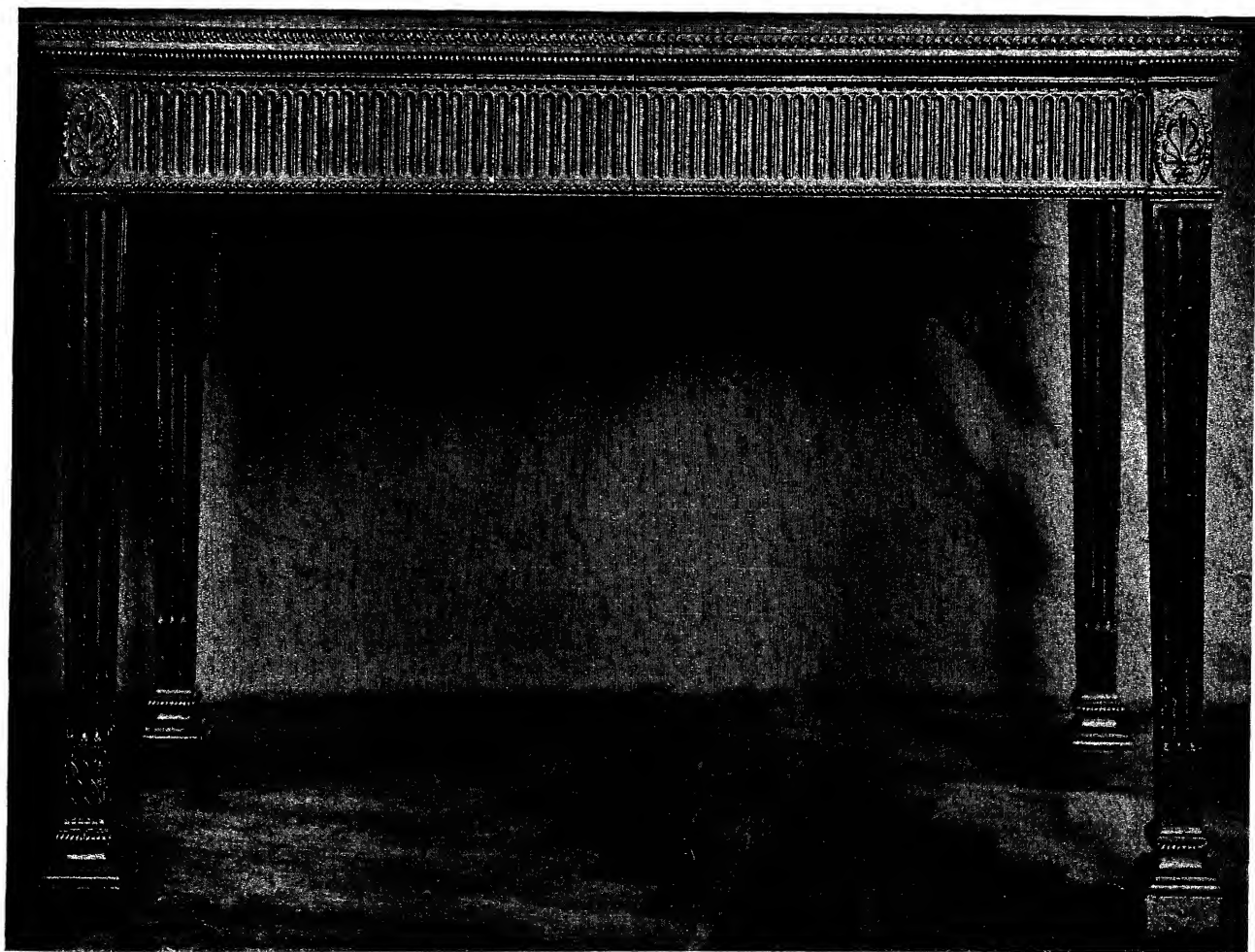


FIG. 72.—MAHOGANY SIDE-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches ; length, 5 feet.  
Property of D. L. ISAACS, Esq.



FIG. 73.—MAHOGANY SIDE-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches ; length, 5 feet.  
Property of L. FLEISCHMANN, Esq.

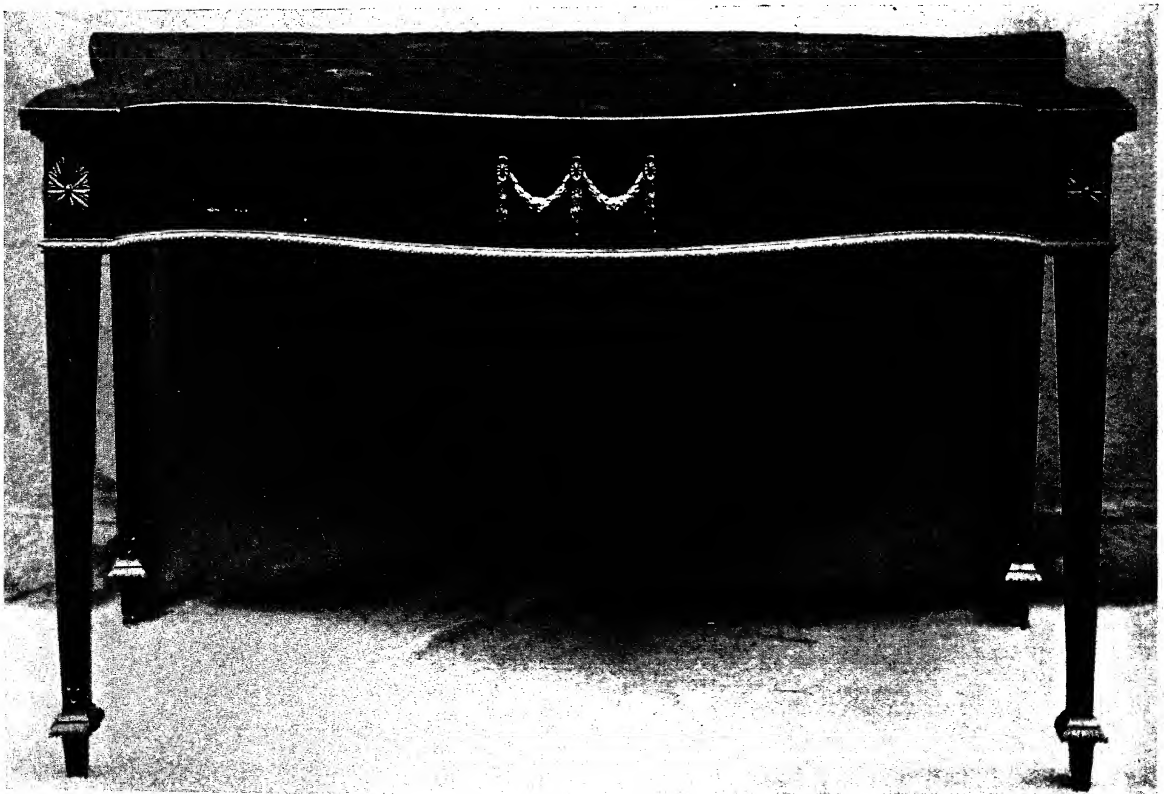


FIG. 74.—MAHOGANY SIDE-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 11 inches ; length, 6 feet 8 inches.

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and the introduction of the shamrock leaf clearly point to Irish origin, the insertion and treatment of the quatrefoil at the spring of the legs is also indicative of that nationality ; the colour of this handsome side-table is a deep brown, the surface possessing a bronze-like quality rarely found after 1760, for the darker and harder Cuban wood was being gradually superseded by that of Honduras, the latter being more suitable to receive inlay, and capable of a larger cutting.

Fig. 74, of the school of Hepplewhite, shows the extreme simplicity preserved at times in these large side-tables. The construction of this specimen shows great solidity, and is entirely dependent for its charm on correctness of proportion, the little ornament introduced being of a simple and uninteresting nature ; the feet are especially graceful, and the wood throughout is of picked quality. An entirely different sentiment is conveyed by the table, fig. 75, one of a pair from Nostell, designed by Adam and carried out by Chippendale in 1768. These were made for the hall where they now stand, and are of soft wood, and were doubtless originally gilt ; at present they are painted a light brown. The fleur-de-pêche marble top is framed in a purely classical frieze supported by four terminal figures connected with boldly carved festoons of garrya husks. The modelling of the torsos and the careful detail of the faces is remarkable. The stretchers connecting the vase-shaped feet are quite straight and simple, and the centre patera bears the Wynne crest ; the large open treatment and absence of metal-work is indicative of Adam's early style. In the gilt console-table (fig. 76), also from Nostell, and evidently made at the same time, a somewhat similar motive is preserved, but in this case, medallions take the place of the daisy pateræ and torsos. As a heading to the honeysuckle pendants decorating the legs, classical ox skulls with drapery are introduced. The origin of this detail in classical ornament is another instance of Art adapting an accidental arrangement to a permanent purpose ; the skulls of animals used in sacrifice, together with their votive garlands and other emblems of ceremony, were frequently



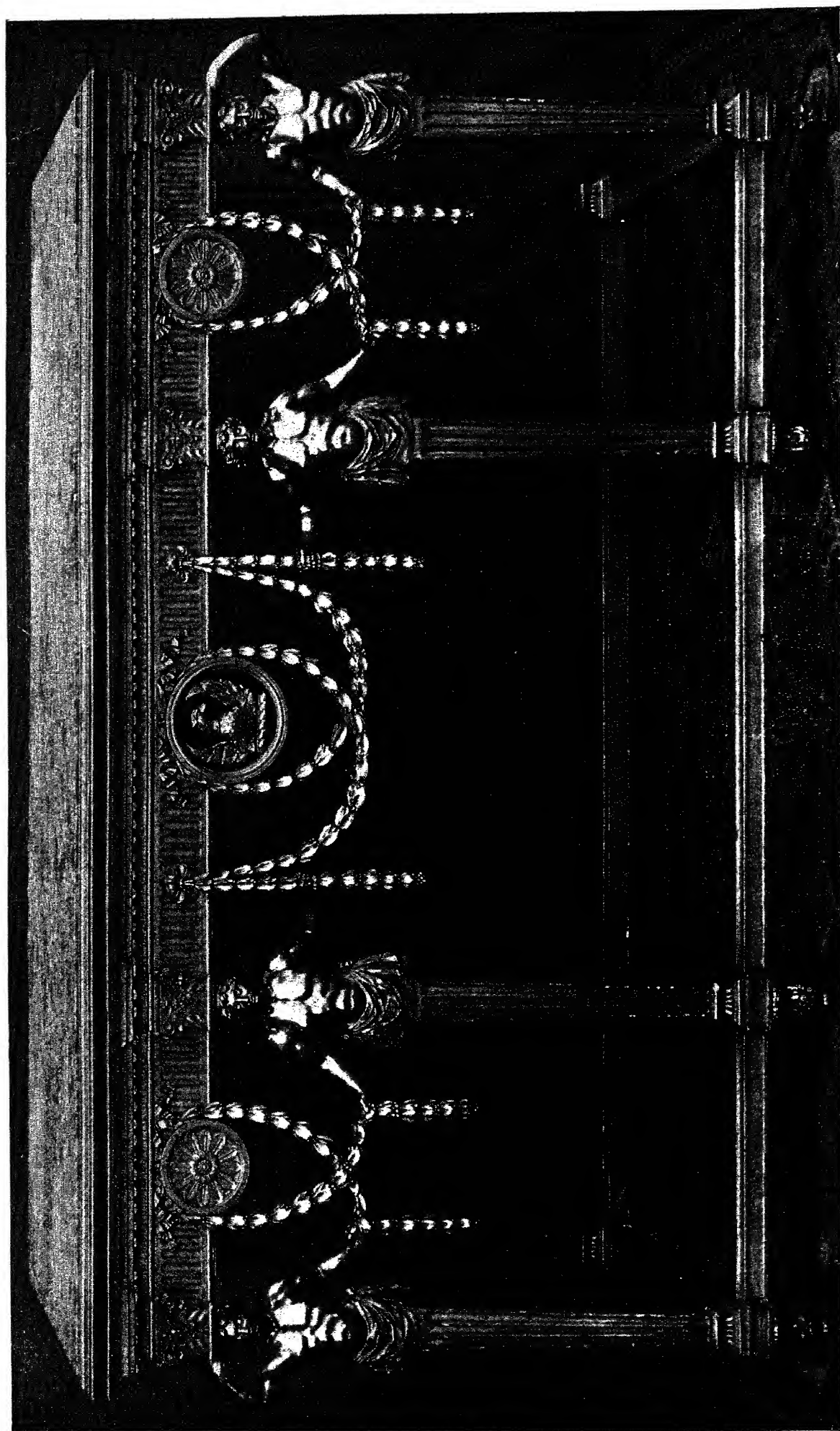


FIG. 75.—GILT SIDE-TABLE. Height, 3 feet 2 inches; length, 5 feet 2 inches; breadth, 2 feet 6 inches.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.



FIG. 76.—GILT CONSOLE-TABLE. Height, 3 feet 1 inch ; length, 4 feet 10 inches.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

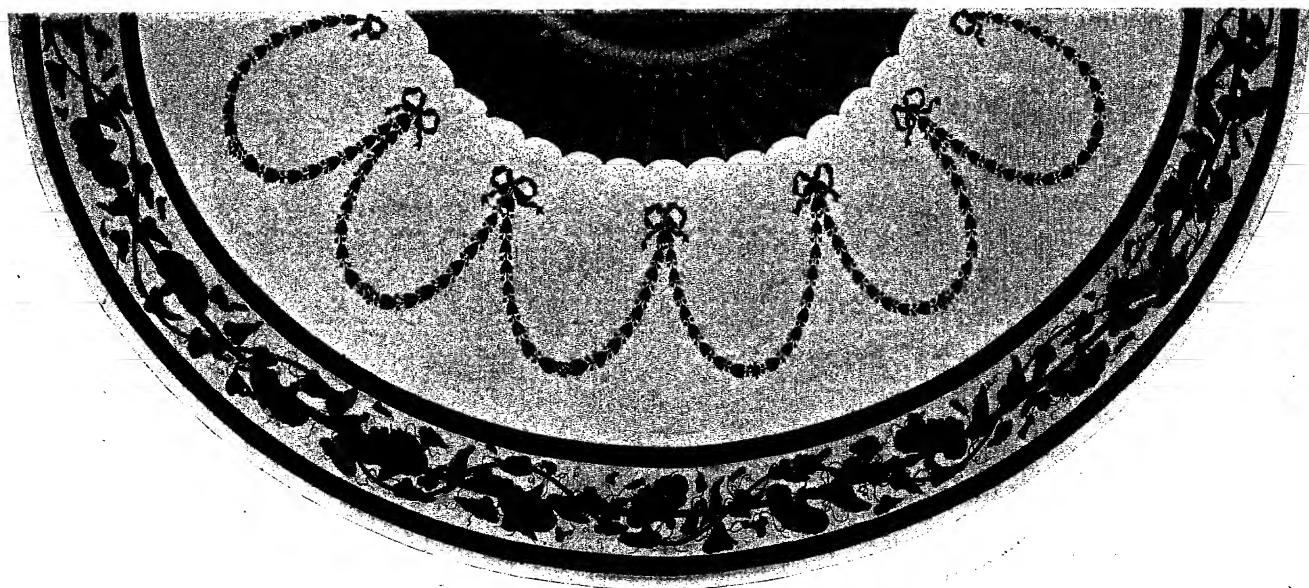


FIG. 77.—MARBLE TABLE-TOP INLAID WITH COLOURED CEMENTS.  
Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

hung upon the walls of classical temples ; these being reproduced in marble by Greek and Roman artists, became accepted details of decoration, were revived by the renaissance sculptor, and later again by Adam and the eighteenth-century Italian school.

The top of this table is of white marble inlaid with a classical design composed of coloured cement. This stone intarsia or marqueterie was brought to great perfection by an Italian named Bossi, one of the many clever craftsmen of that nationality, working in England under the auspices of Adam.

Bossi's ingredients and process were a secret, much of his work being carried out under lock and key in the actual houses of the Irish aristocracy, who formed his principal clientele. The mantelpieces and table-tops decorated in this manner were incised with a design, and filled in with a composition that hardened to the consistency of the surrounding marble, beautiful coloured effects being produced in this way.

There is a tradition that a certain nobleman, in whose house Bossi was working, took some friends to see the process without the knowledge of the artist, who consequently became so enraged that he threw up the work and returned to Italy, carrying with him the secret of his invention. Fig. 77 represents one of these table-tops, similar to that on the Nostell specimen, but a few years later in date, and without doubt from the secret workshops of Signor Bossi. The marble is Parian, without stain or flaw ; the beautifully drawn and inlaid border of convolvulus is in a coloured composition of the most delicate blues, pale lilacs, and greens ; the accuracy of the work is remarkable, but as a process the results are rather hard.

The side-table (fig. 78), one of a pair, was evidently made and supplied by Chippendale to Harewood at the same time as the dining-room furniture, but certainly never formed part of it, for the tops (fig. 79) are of the most beautiful and elaborate inlay, and therefore not suited to the wear of hot plates and dishes ; moreover, having always

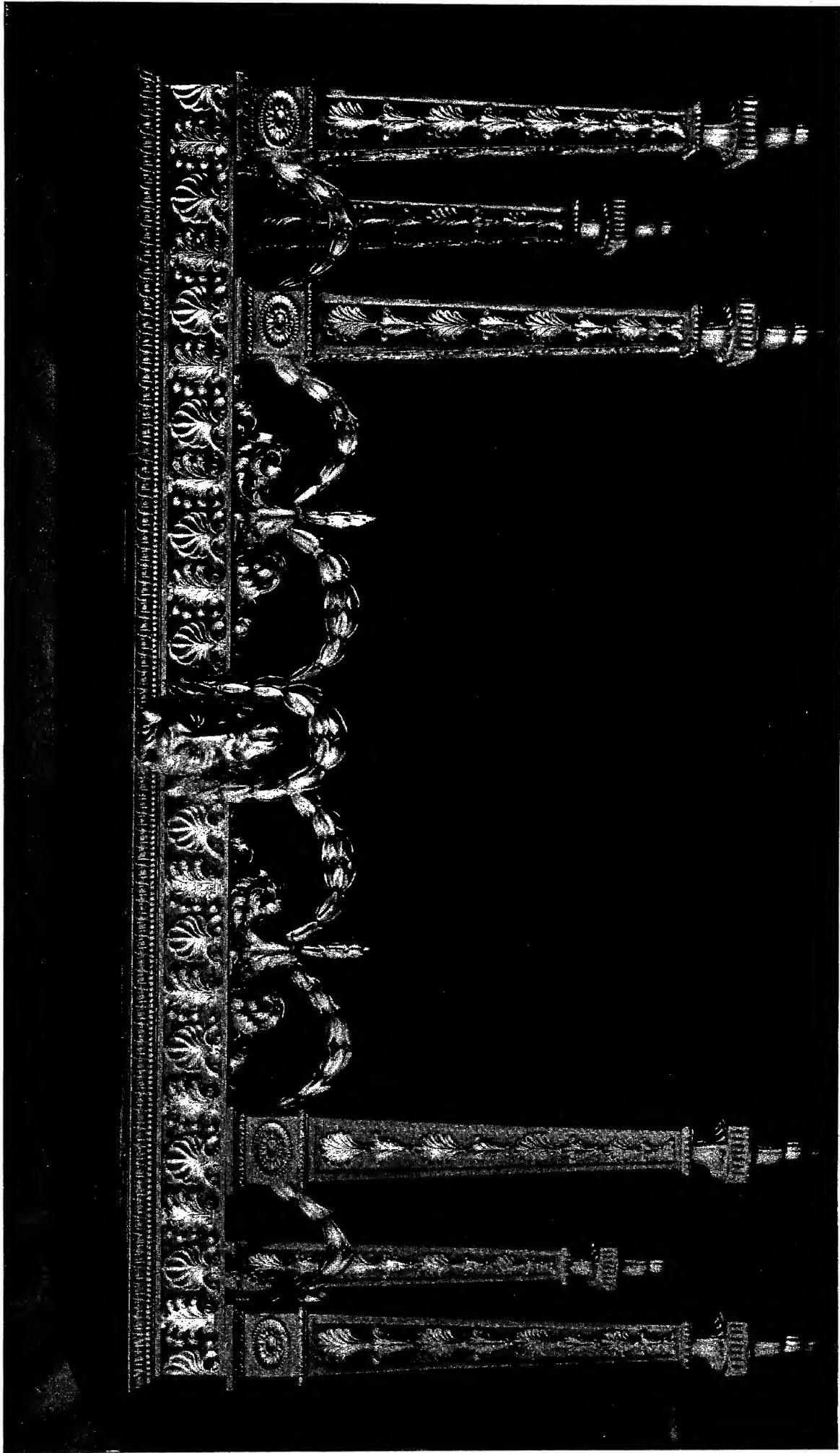


FIG. 78.—GILT SIDE-TABLE WITH INLAID TOP. Height, 2 feet 10 inches; length, 5 feet 9 inches; width, 2 feet 6 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

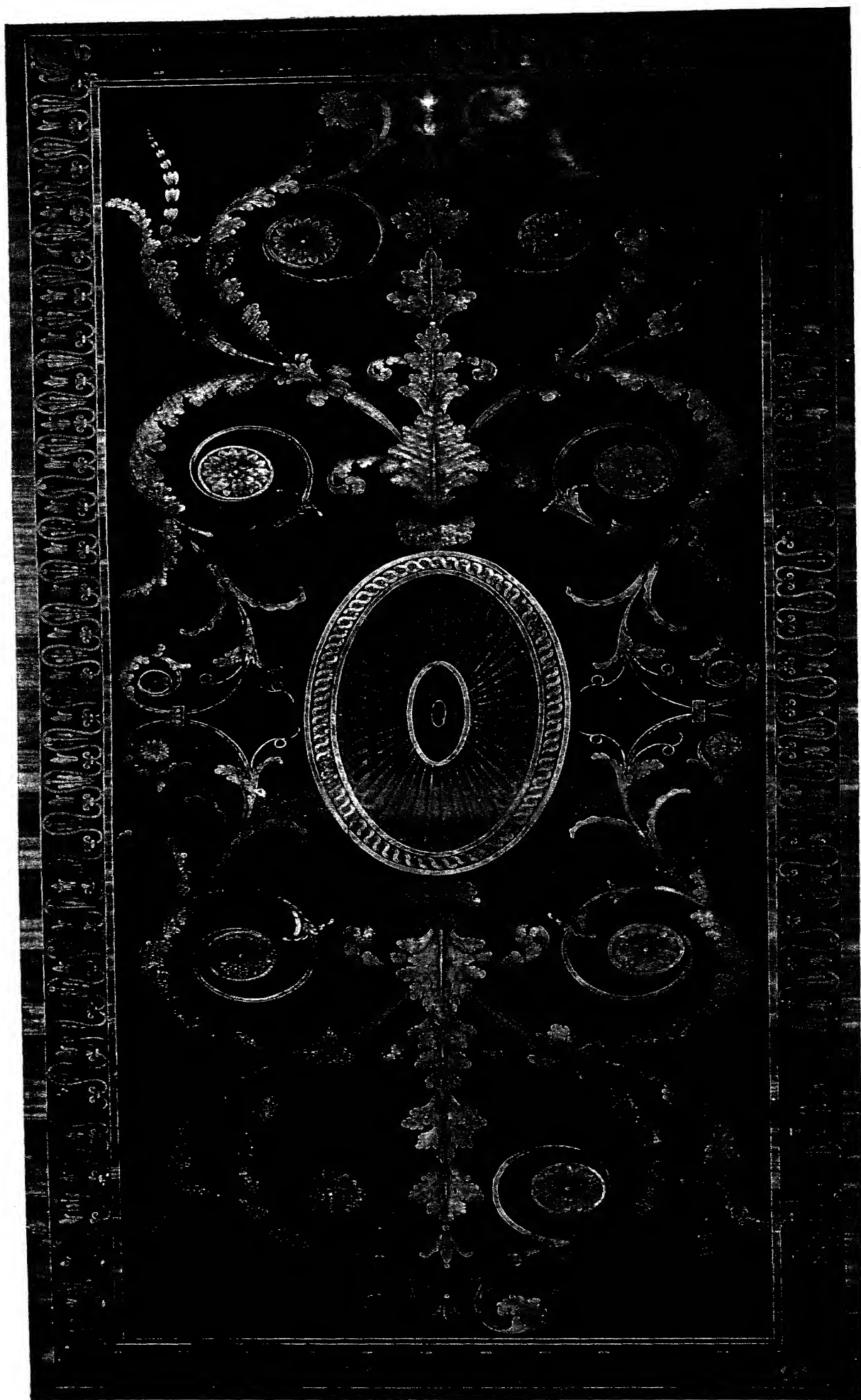


FIG. 79.—TOP OF SIDE-TABLE (FIG. 78).

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

been excluded from the light, and protected by a covering, the stained woods have retained their original colour. The blues, greens, purples, and deep amber gold of the delicately drawn inlay possess the lustre and colour of a peacock's back, the groundwork being of dark rosewood; the edging is a broad band of tulip-wood, which still retains an exquisite rose colour, the hoop and pheon pattern of the border and the central oval being of satin-wood, the latter banded with green. The legs, festoons, and frieze of these brilliant tables are carved in soft wood and entirely gilt in two shades. The inlaid design of the tops is in accordance with the plaster work wall-panels of this room (fig. 80). Adam learnt the recipe for making composition ornaments in Italy, and carefully preserved its secret. The material is extremely hard, and has well stood the test of time, but is a totally different composition to that of modern carton-pierre. Amongst other items of great interest connected with the decorations of Adam at Harewood is the carpet for this room, which repeats the design of the ceiling, and the mahogany doors (fig. 81), with their carved architraves, over a hundred in number, throughout the house.

Fig. 82 is a piece from Burghley,



FIG. 80.—PLASTER PANEL.  
MUSIC ROOM, HAREWOOD HOUSE.

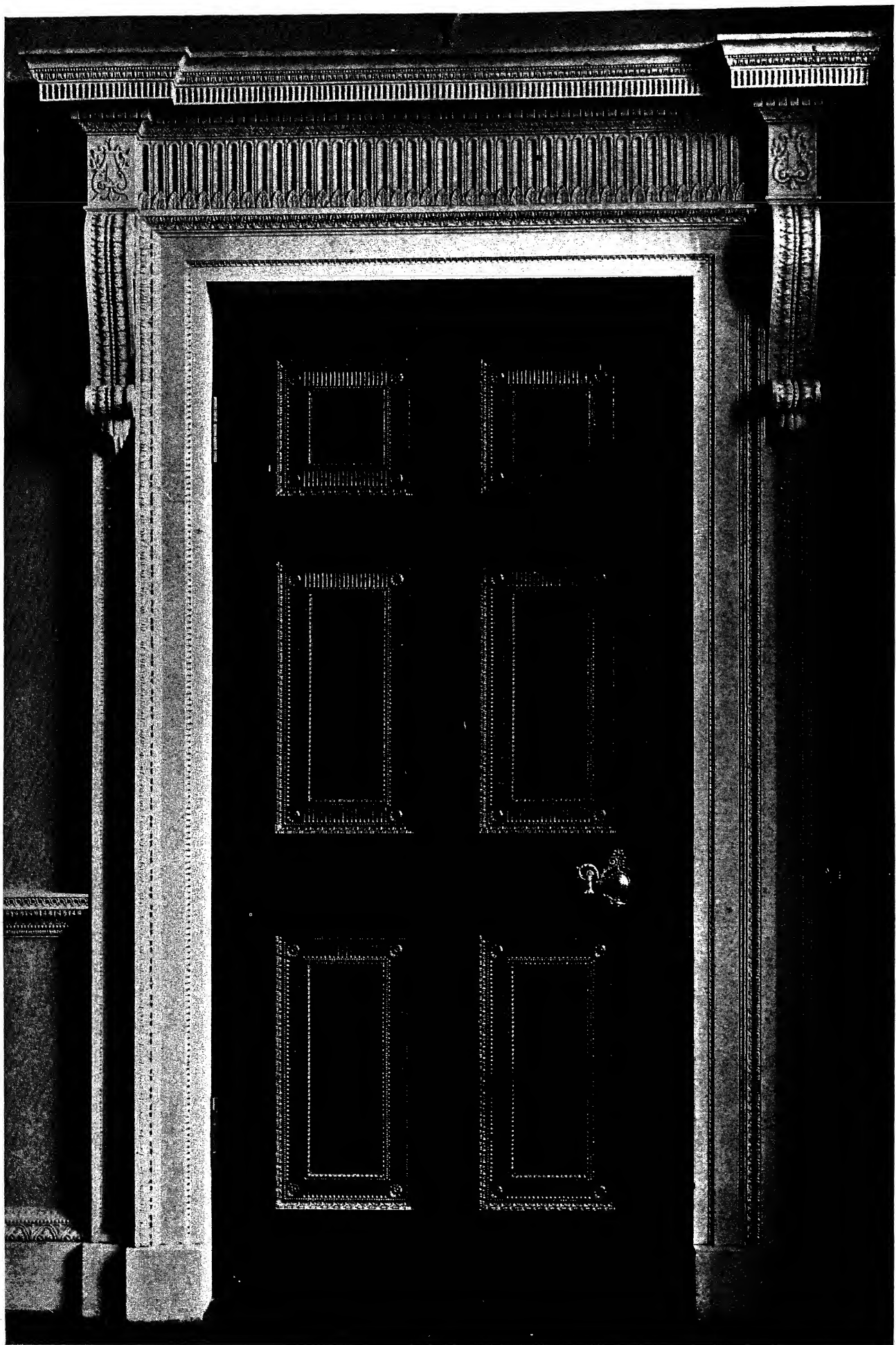


FIG. 81.—MAHOGANY DOOR, HAREWOOD HOUSE.

PLATE V (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

GILT TABLE WITH MARBLE TOP

HEIGHT, 3 FEET  $1\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

LENGTH, 6 ..

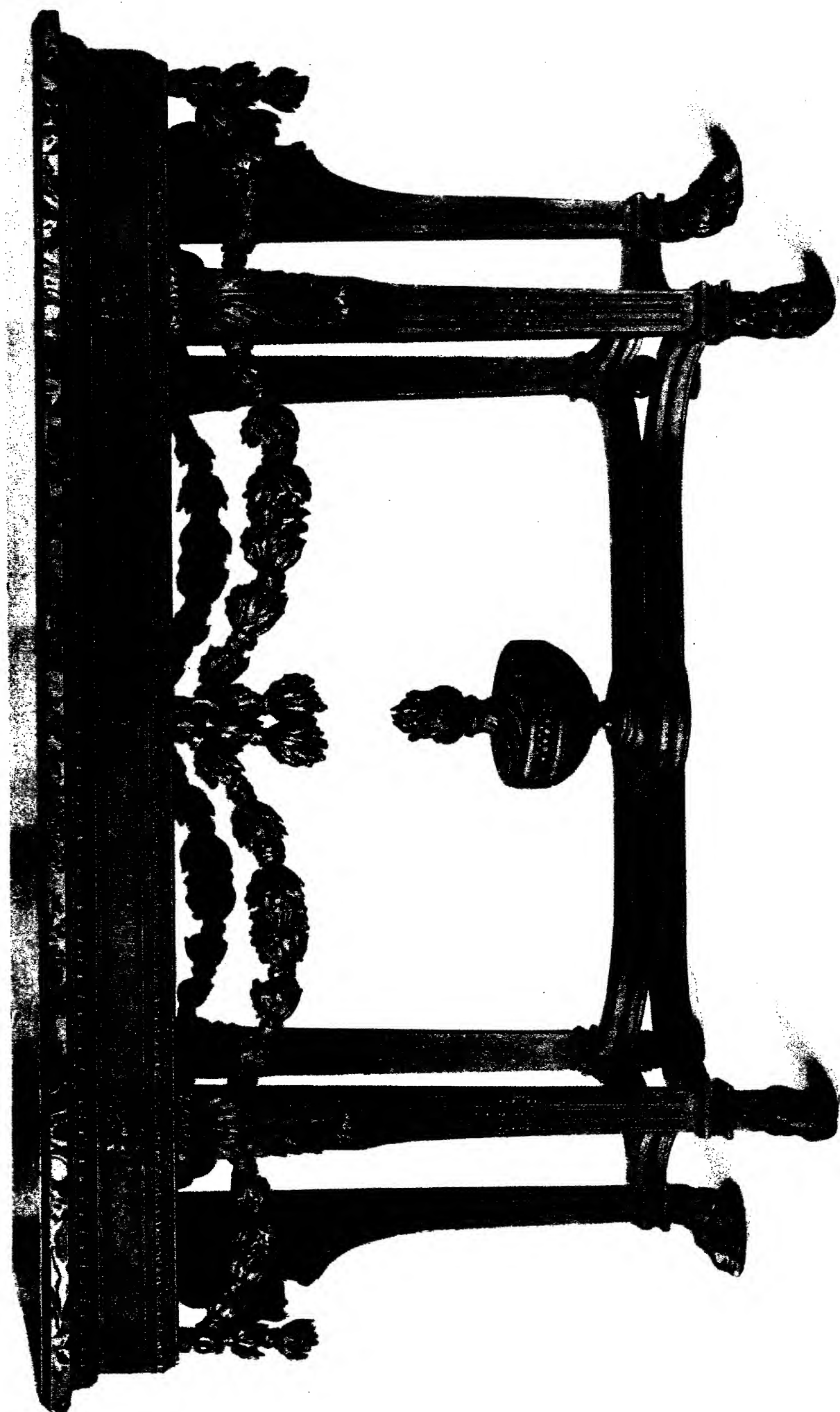
DEPTH, 3 .. 1 INCH

PROPERTY OF

W. INGHAM WHITAKER, Esq.









# ENGLISH FURNITURE

of unusual shape, and in the Hepplewhite style of about 1775. It forms a side-table, the front being divided into three tiers of drawers inlaid in the rather disconnected manner of this maker's early work ; the legs and taper feet are most tasteful and delicate in their gradation, but the inverted lunettes, of fan inlay, are by no means necessary or successful.

Large tables to stand out in the drawing-rooms, even in Chippendale's best period, were not often made, and after 1765 they are extremely rare. Plate v., of about 1770, is so fine in its large character that it was probably carried out from a drawing by Adam ; the top is of fleur-de-pêche marble, the frame and legs being gilt ; the decoration of the former consists of a finely carved leaf moulding which runs all round the frame, from which hang festoons of very elaborately carved garrya husks ;

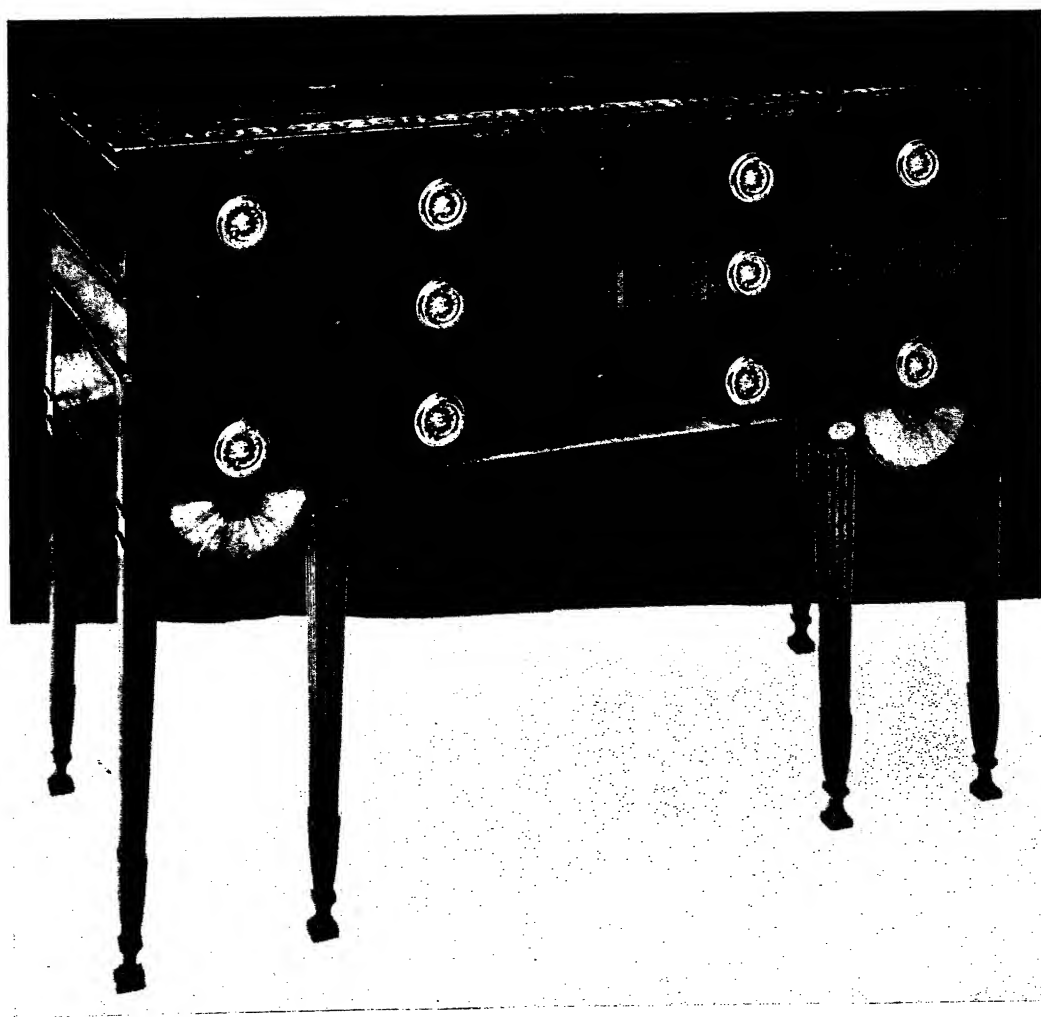


FIG. 82.—MAHOGANY SIDE-TABLE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches ; length, 4 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF EXETER.



FIG. 83.—HAREWOOD INLAID PEMBROKE WRITING-TABLE.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY.

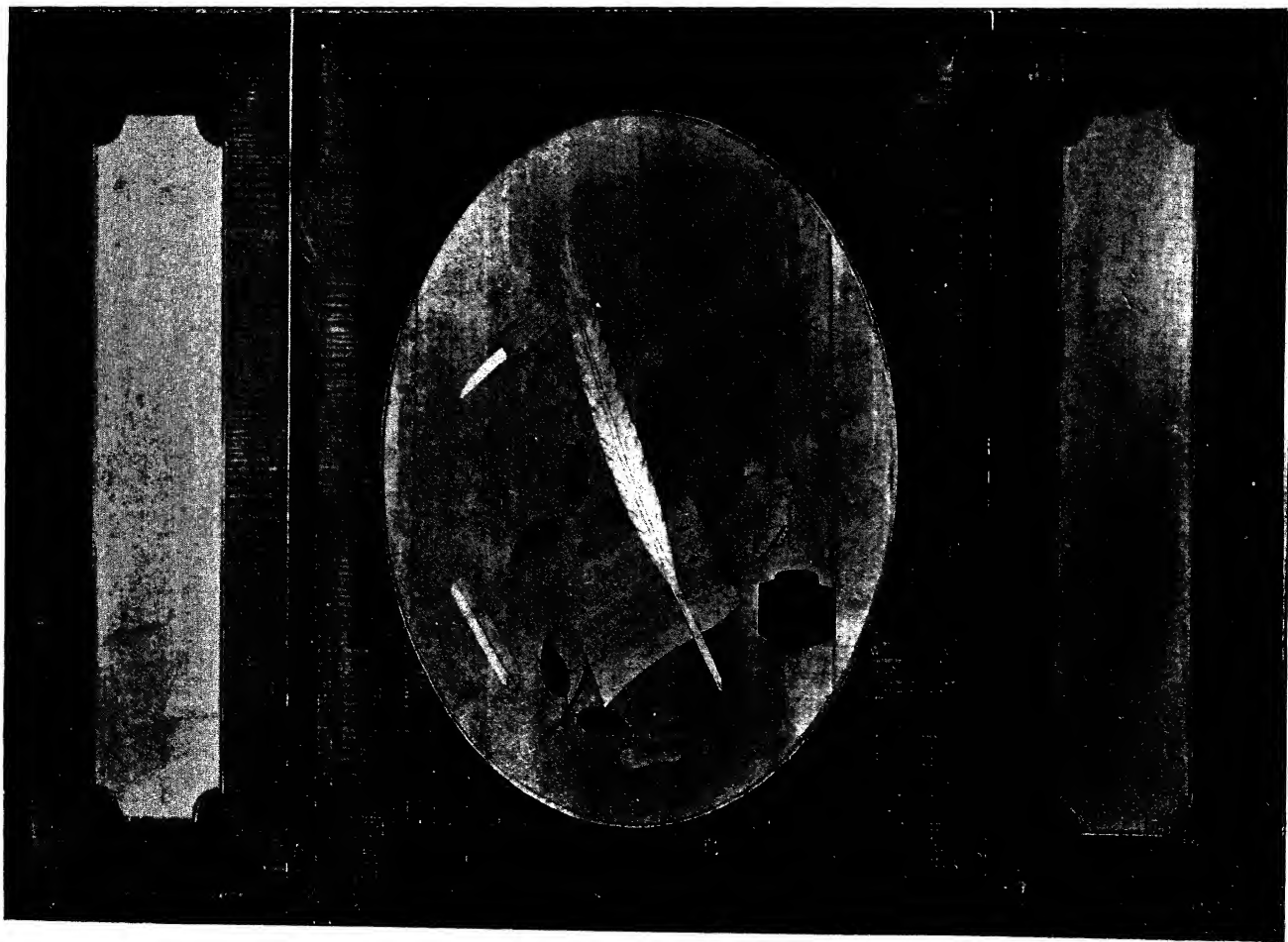


FIG. 84.—TOP OF WRITING-TABLE (FIG. 83).

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

the petals are doubled and crimped, and resemble in their execution those introduced in Charles II. and William III. stonework ; the legs are nearly plain, but curve outwards, and end in goats' feet. The table is exactly the same on all four of its sides, showing that it was not intended to be placed against a wall.

Smaller tables of what is called Pembroke shape were a great feature in late eighteenth-century furniture ; these took the place of the china and round tables of the previous twenty years. At first the inlay introduced was comparatively simple, but shortly became more elaborate,



FIG. 85.—INLAID MAHOGANY PEMBROKE TABLE. Height, 2 feet 5 inches ; length, 3 feet.  
Property of H. FRANKLIN, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

being occasionally distributed over the surface of the top. A few characteristic examples are selected from the large number of these still in existence.

Fig. 83, of about 1768, still preserves the straight legs of Chippendale, which are united by a tray hollowed out for the convenience of a writer; the emblems inlaid on the oval satin-wood panel of the top (fig. 84), inferring that it is a lady's writing-table, represent an inkpot, pen, paper, eraser, a seal, and wafers; the satin-wood panels are

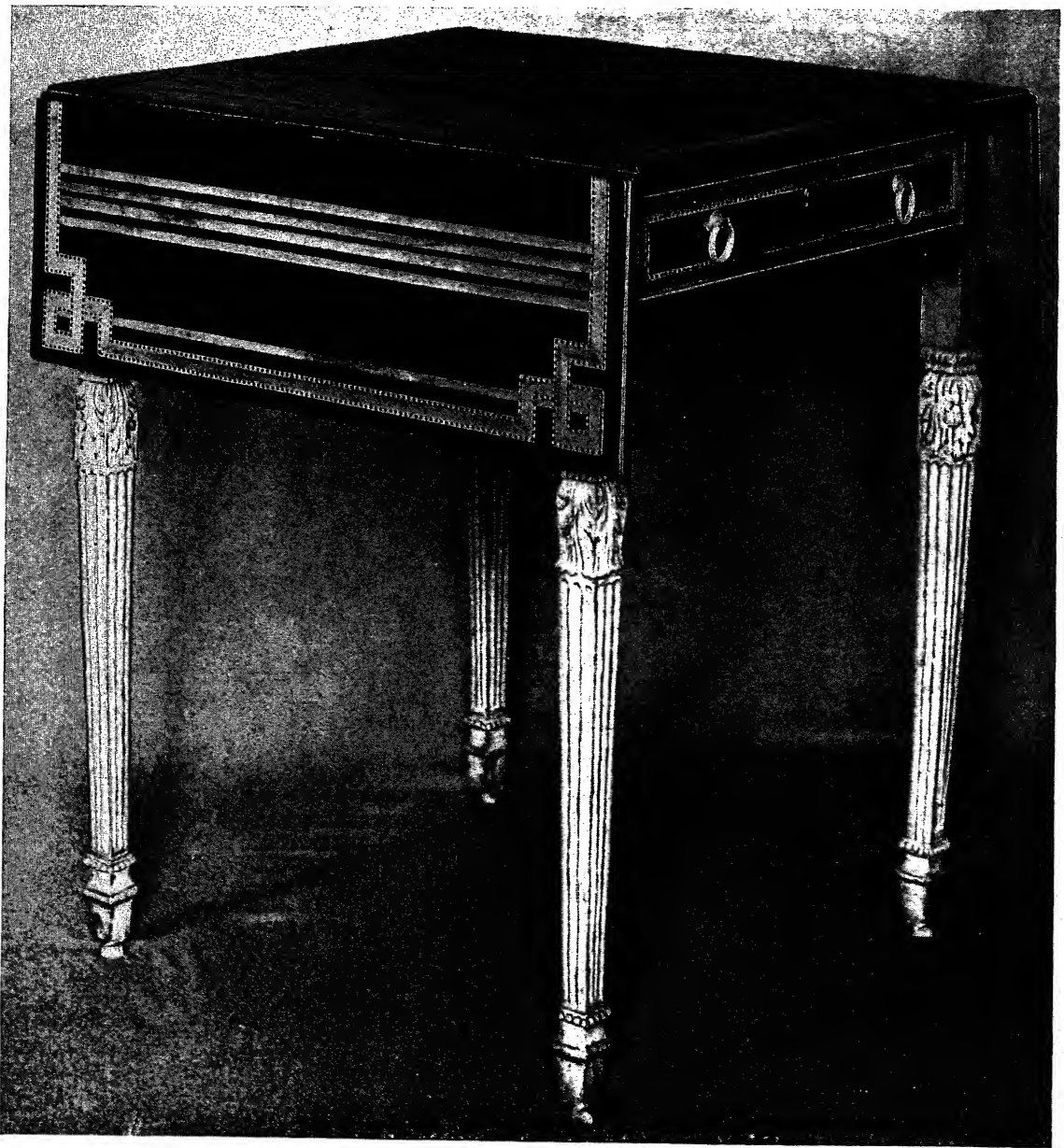


FIG. 86.—SATIN-WOOD AND INLAID PEMBROKE TABLE.

Property of LADY PEARSON.

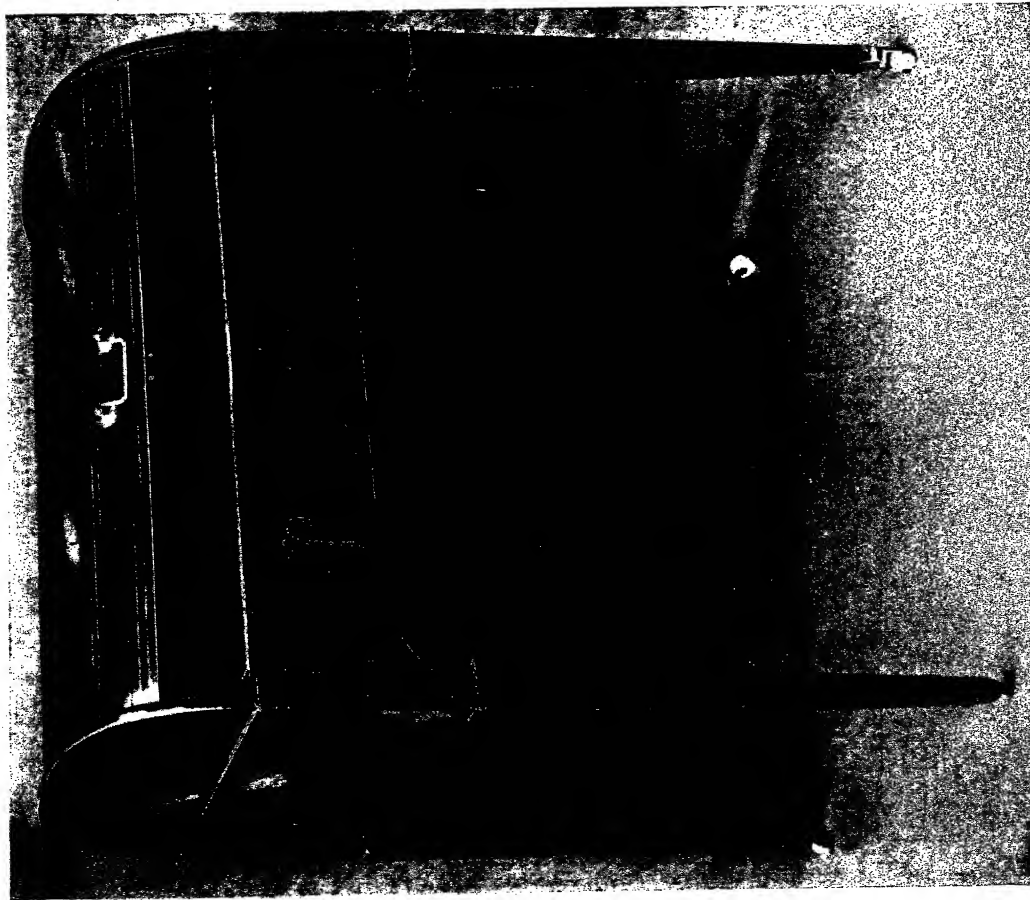


FIG. 87.—MAHOGANY INLAID TAMBOUR-TABLE.  
Height, 3 feet 1 inch; length, 2 feet 7 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY.

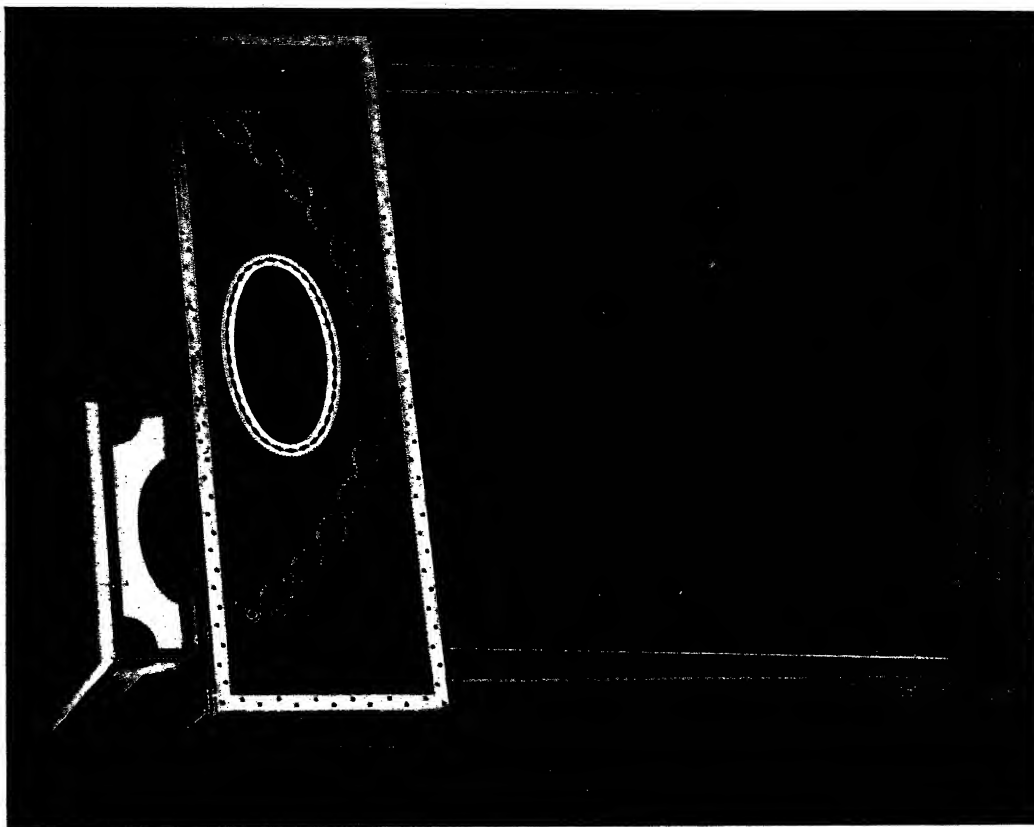


FIG. 88.—HAREWOOD INLAID PEMBROKE TABLE.  
Property of COLONEL FEARON TIPPING.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

surrounded with a well-figured veneer of sycamore, this being again edged with a banding of mahogany ; the florid brass handle on the drawer is contemporary with the transitional date of the piece.

Fig. 85, a few years later in date, is oval when the flaps are extended, and shows the combination of carving and inlay. The festoons at the end are still large in character, but the border at the top shows a tendency towards finer detail. This table is of mahogany, inlaid with rose and satin wood. The excellence of its finish, especially in such parts as the rule-jointing of the flaps, infers the work of some good maker, and suggests Hepplewhite. A rather disconnected effect is produced in the table (fig. 86) by the legs being of carved and unpolished satin-wood, whilst the top is composed of a series of bands in mahogany, satin, and green-stained wood. This difference of tone, however, is more apparent in the illustration than on the table itself, which is original and brilliant in colour. It is difficult to assign a particular maker to the elegant little tambour writing-table (fig. 87), but its date is about 1780. The inlay resembles the design of Hepplewhite, but the general proportion pervading the whole does not suggest that maker ; the drawer front is of fiddleback mahogany, the rest of the piece being of the same wood inlaid with panels of satin-wood.

For the same reasons it is unlikely to imagine that Hepplewhite is the author of the Pembroke table (fig. 88), although the character of its inlay is certainly antecedent to the advent of Sheraton (1790), to whom such tables are generally assigned. But whoever the maker may have been, the cabinet-work is remarkable, for one of the inlaid panels on the top rises as a secret box when a spring is touched at the side, the joint in the veneer enclosing the panel being quite imperceptible ; under the other panel runs a drawer. The hairwood veneer forming the ground is beautifully rippled, the other woods employed being amboyna, ebony, and holly.

A small satin-wood folding-table of high finish is shown on Plate VI.

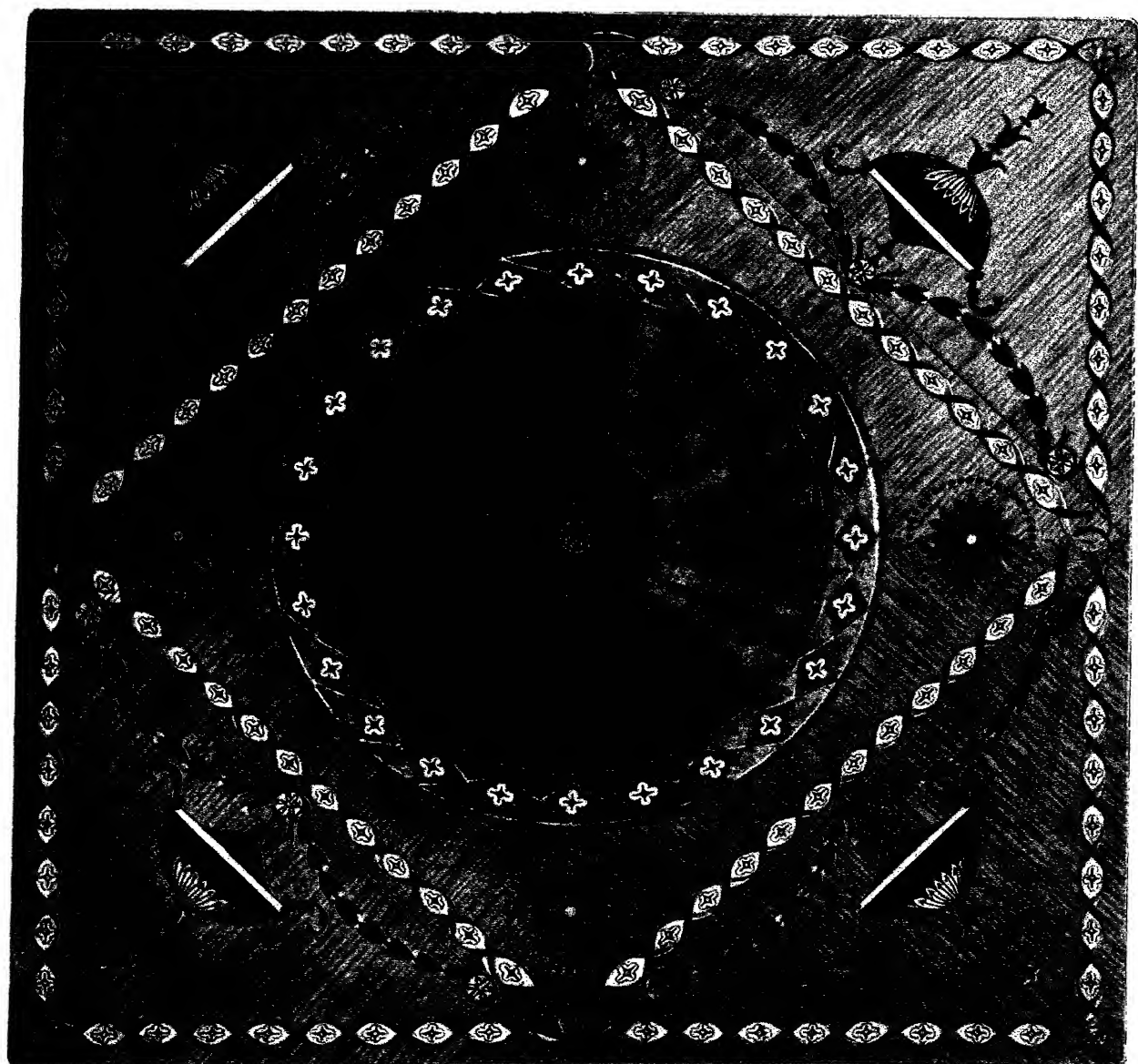
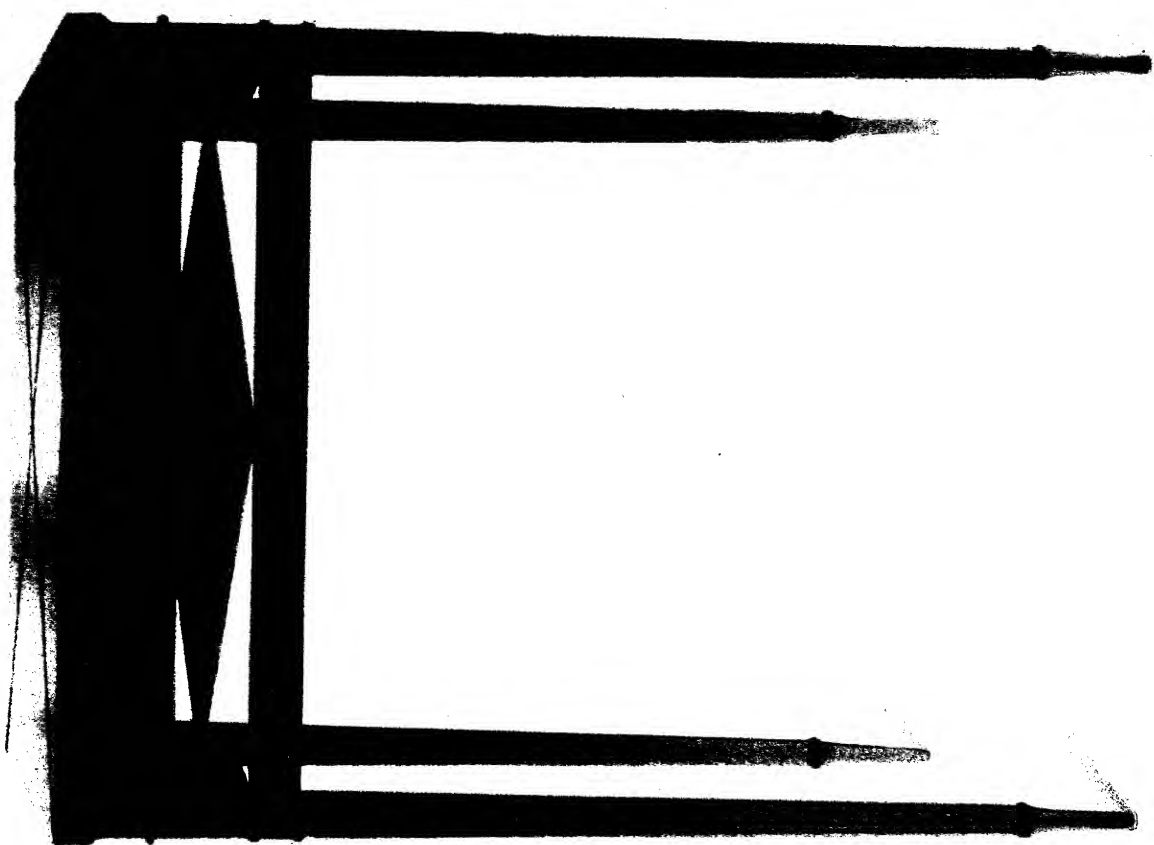
PLATE VI (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

INLAID FOLDING CARD-TABLE

HEIGHT . . . . . 2 FEET 5 INCHES  
BREADTH . . . . . 2 „  
SIZE OF TOP (OPEN), 2 „ 9½ „ SQUARE

PROPERTY OF  
LORD ZOUCHE OF HARYNGWORTH







# ENGLISH FURNITURE

It is of unusual construction, the top swinging round on a pivot and opening in four triangular leaves, the corners of the frame forming their supports. This top is inlaid with four fanned lunettes of green-stained wood enclosed with lines of garrya husks, and the sides with minute circles of tulip-wood; the frame is perforated and elaborately inlaid, supported on legs treated in the same manner with reeded channels of green wood. The inner surface, when open, presents a brilliant appearance, for never having been exposed to the light, the colours of the stained woods are in their original condition. This design centres in a lotus with golden anthers and petals of turquoise, olive green and pale mulberry, and is surrounded by the usual Adam pateræ, ribbon borders and wreaths of similar colours; the flaps, centring in urns, are in red, green, yellow, and various tinted woods. The work forms a wonderful example of wood-staining, and even in so small a piece shows the delicate sense of colour possessed by Robert Adam.

## CHAPTER IV



CHAIRS after 1770 approach their final development, lightness, simplicity of line, with comparative absence of carving, being their chief characteristics, for although the latter feature died hard, slightness of construction and a very restrained taste in ornament was not conducive to opportunity in this respect, and after inlay had taken the place of carving, painting for a few years usurped the place of both. A comparison between a chair of Elizabethan times and one of Hepplewhite, the last of the great chair designers, gives a better idea of the change in manners and customs that had taken place during that interval of three hundred years, than any other furniture that has come down to us. The intermediate evolutions, though gradual, can be attributed to definite causes. The panel-backed chair of oak, with its cumbrous and barbaric severity, was constructed to resist the rough usage it constantly received, and was made of sufficient durability in texture and strength to receive a man heavily armed. To these succeeded the tall backed chairs of the age of walnut, carved with a perforated cresting that formed a frame to the periwig of the sitter, and with free picturesque lines. Then came the plain walnut in an age when all things were plain, the back curtailed to avoid the grease and powdered heads of their owners, and as the gaiety and the lightness of French fashions were introduced, this heaviness gave way before the genius of Chippendale, and chairs corresponded in their fanciful forms with the frivolous appearance and artificial life of those who used them. In the designs of Adam and Hepplewhite the personal appearance of the occupant was not considered, the chair being constructed with simple outlines that combined lightness



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

with comfort. At first the backs were at times hoop-shaped, but these rapidly gave way to those of rectangular shape, and the serpentine line of Chippendale was soon discarded.

The next innovation by Adam was a padded oval back, retaining the comfort but reducing the size of the so-called French chair of Chippendale. The ovals of these backs were also made in an open-work design of wood, and this form was still further varied by the heart or shield-shaped back introduced by Hepplewhite about 1770. In the legs of chairs of the new style, a tapered straight shape was adopted in place of the cabriole leg, the ball and claw and the scrolled foot being entirely abandoned in favour of a tapered and plinth-shaped block. These legs were plainly fluted or faced with a carved pendant of garrya husks. Cylindrical tapered or fluted legs were also introduced, intersected with rings and knobs of carved ornament, but as the evolution proceeded, its whole tendency became one of lighter construction, until the foot as a distinct finish finally disappeared. The seat also became smaller and slighter, for the cloth and silk of coats and dresses were of far thinner quality, cut with fewer folds, and so capable of being compressed into a smaller space; another reason for reduction in the

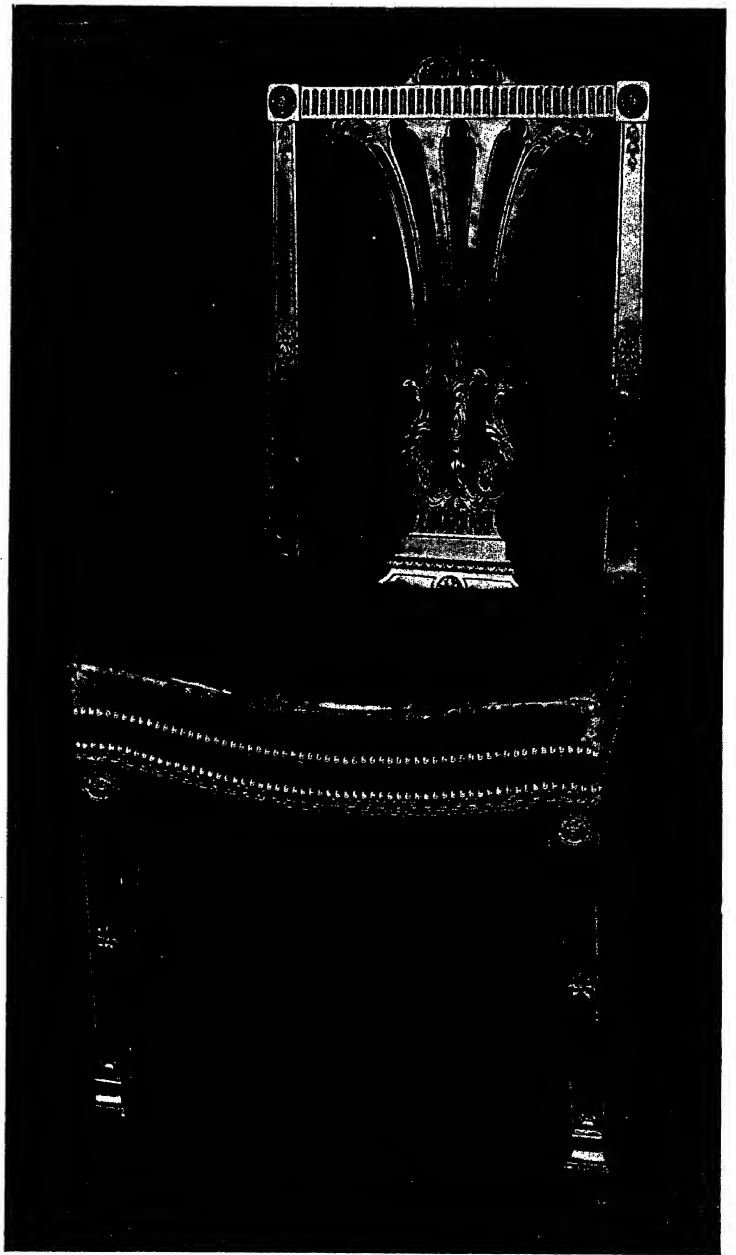


FIG. 89.—MAHOGANY CHAIR. Height, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

general size of chairs was the great increase in their quantity, for during the last quarter of the eighteenth century more chairs were manufactured and used in the ordinary household than during the whole of the previous fifty years, so that the space occupied by them in an ordinary room became a matter for consideration.

Although it is naturally impossible to give the many varieties of chairs made during the last thirty years of the eighteenth century, it is advisable, even at the expense of being tedious, to attempt a representative selection. The first series of examples are known to have been actually designed by Adam, and according to documentary evidence carried out by Chippendale.

In fig. 89 can still be seen traces of the earlier style. It is a chair from the dining-room set at Harewood, and was made by Chippendale for the house about 1768. The top rail is straight for the first time in the eighteenth century; the carving on this is channelled, and caps the uprights with pateræ on plain squares. The splat and cresting is florid, and in the style of the previous ten years, so the chair can be termed transitional; the taper legs, with their strong square feet, show the hand of a master in design, and the reticence of their ornament the incoming taste. The mahogany is light in colour, never having been varnished.

Another chair, but in this instance of the severest style, is fig. 90, one of a set from the hall at Nostell Priory, and mentioned in Chippendale's invoice of 1766, which deals with much of the early furniture supplied by him to this house. The design speaks for itself, but the introduction of an oval for hall chairs is found before this date. The carving of the seat-rail and proportions of the legs and arms are especially good and careful.

The curious construction seen in fig. 91 is of about the same date; the waved top rail, supported by a circle filled in with a fretwork and carved star resting on elongated C scrolls, being uncommon. The stretchers connecting the legs are contemporary, the whole set being finished in this

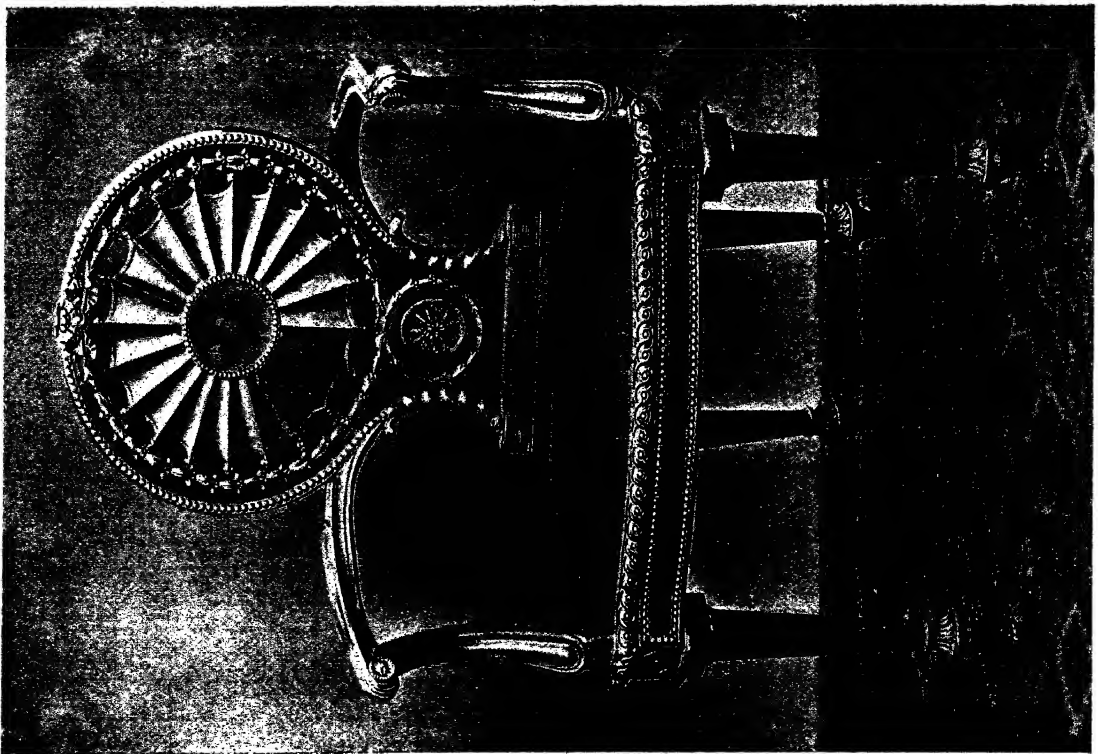


FIG. 90.—PAINTED BEECHWOOD CHAIR.  
Property of Lord St. Oswald.

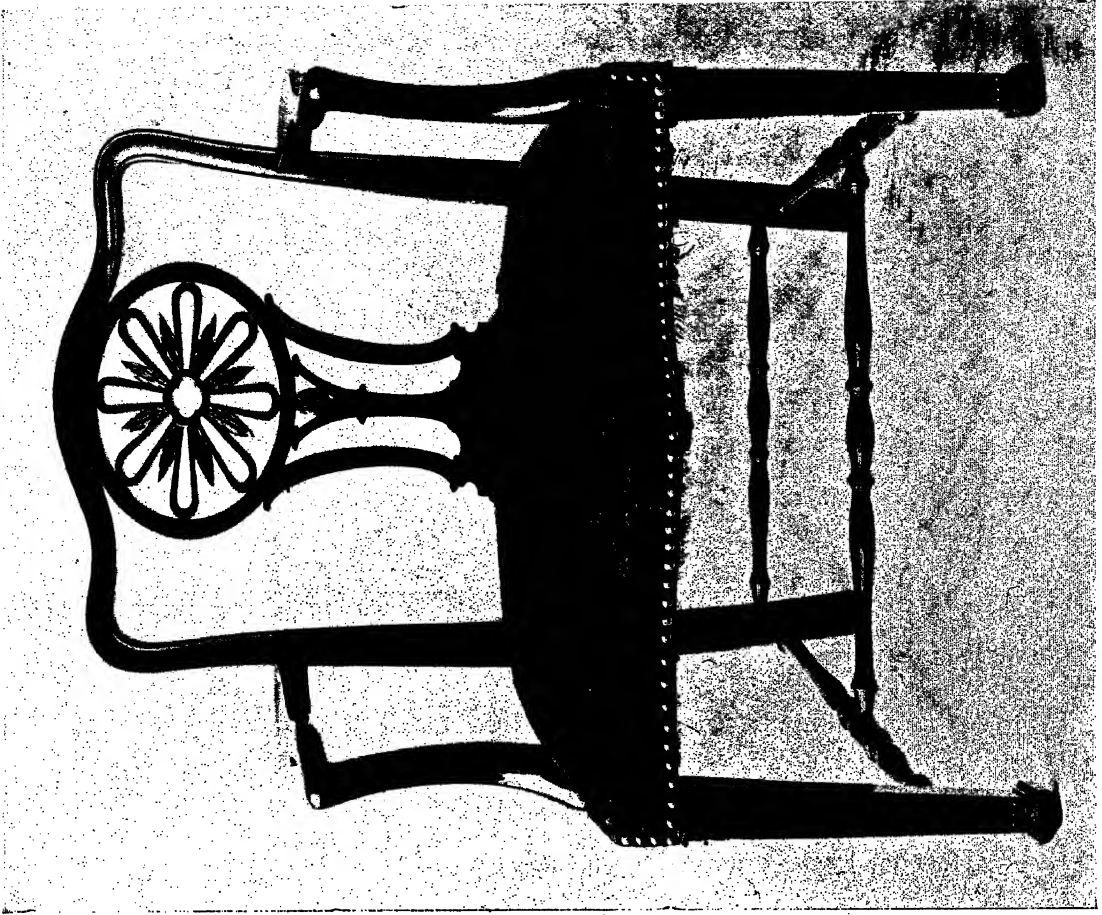


FIG. 91.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR.  
Property of the Duke of Devonshire.

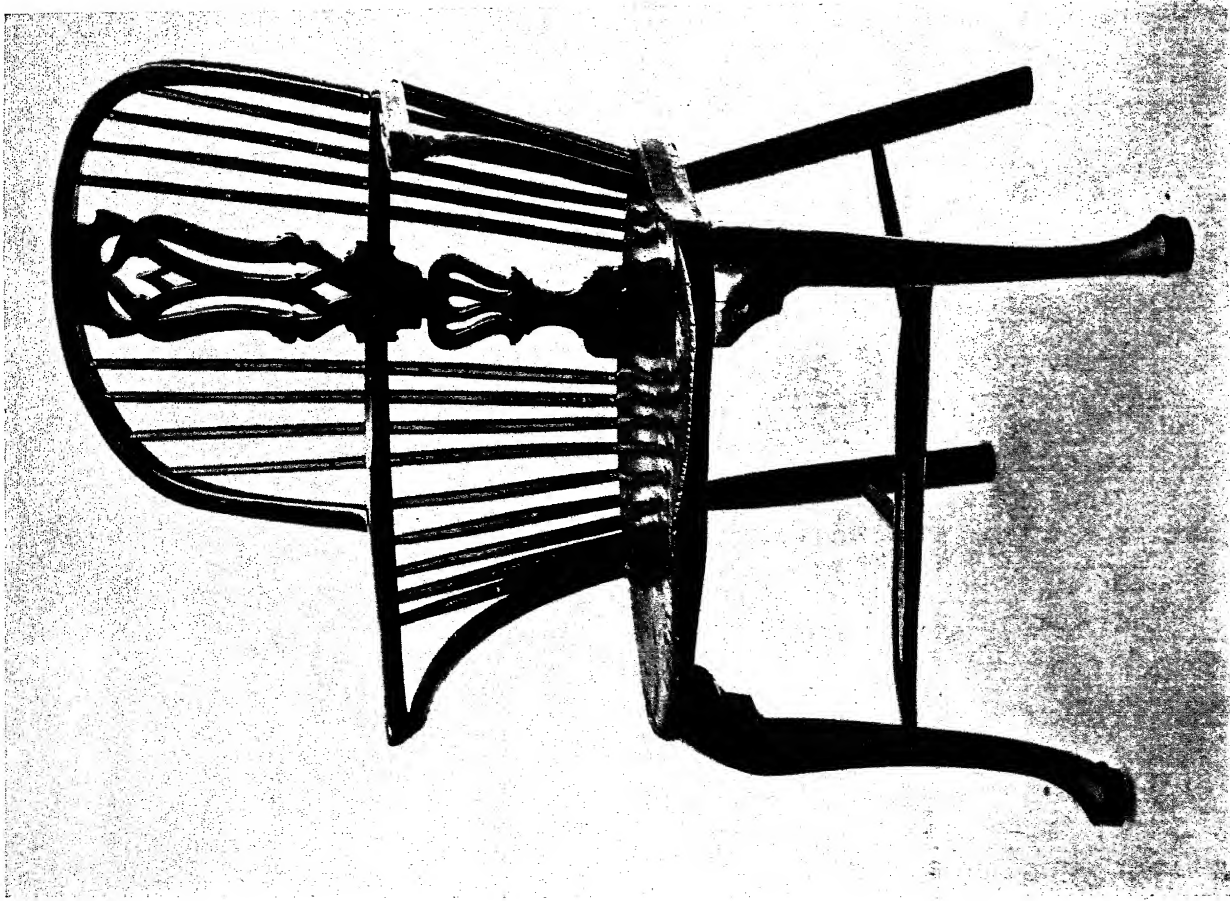


FIG. 92.—YEW ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 6 inches.

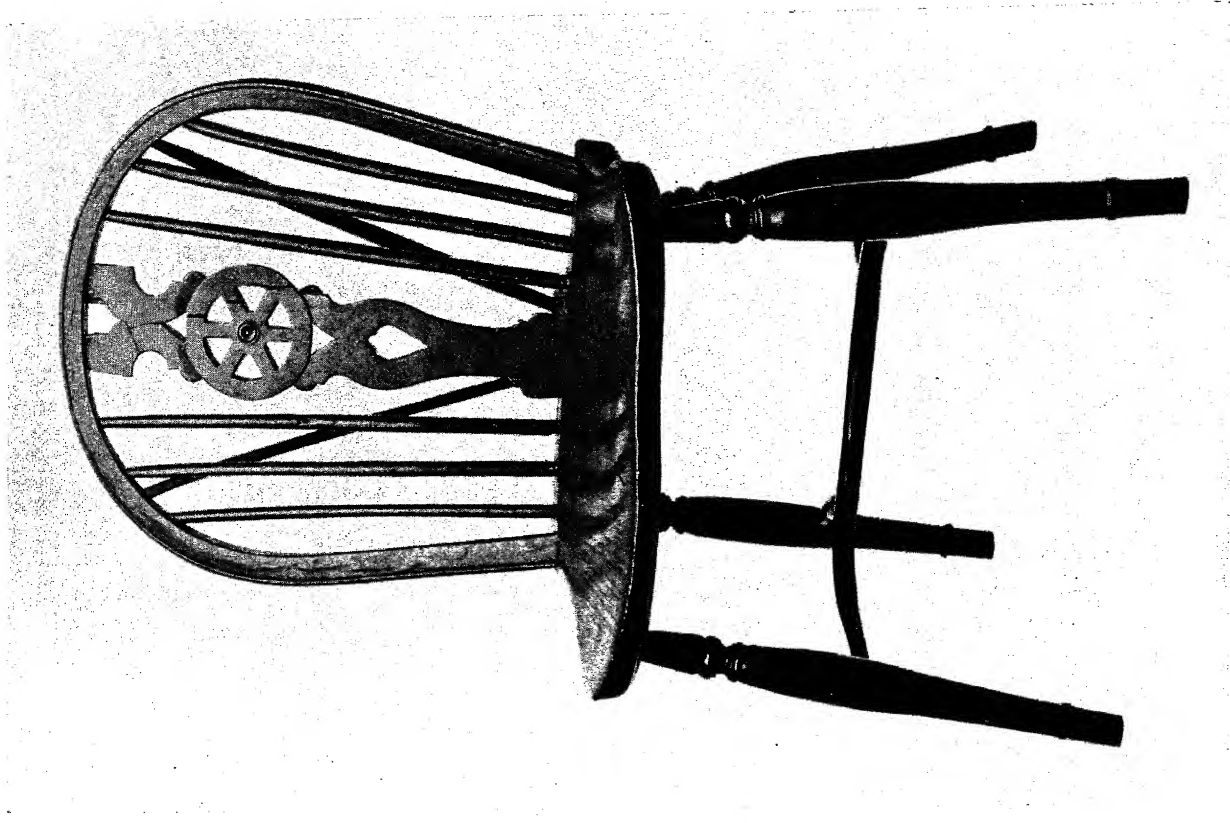


FIG. 93.—YEW CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 2 inches.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

manner, but the chairs are so light in construction for their period that this extra precaution may have been deemed advisable. The seats are covered in the original black horse-hair so largely used at this time.

Stretchers had been practically abandoned by the year 1720, but were revived with the straight-legged chair of Chippendale, and occasionally are found on examples of the Hepplewhite school, but apparently at all times they formed a feature in the construction of common chairs. By the middle of the eighteenth century cheap ordinary chairs were in greater demand, and largely took the place of the oak joint-stools and benches used in coffee-houses, farmhouses, inns, and especially in the numerous tea-gardens on the outskirts of the metropolis and other large towns. So great were the numbers of visitors to these places that attention was called to their increase in one of the contemporary weekly journals, where a calculation was made that on Sundays alone 200,000 people visited the tea-gardens situated on the northern side of London, and as half-a-crown per head was probably the least sum expended by them, it can be no exaggeration to state that £20,000 on a fine Sunday was taken at these places of amusement. Many cheap chairs must therefore have been required at such places of entertainment, and figs. 92 and 93 represent the better class of common chairs made between 1760 and the end of the century for general country use. The backs and arms of these are made of hoops of yew, held together by a number of slender uprights and a perforated splat of the same tough and pliant wood; the seats were invariably of elm, as yew cut into a superficies of any size is liable to split; the legs and stretchers were generally of yew. In addition to these, ladder-back chairs of beech and oak were made all through the second half of the eighteenth century. In large houses plain walnut chairs of George I. and Anne descended to the servants' quarters, and can be found there to this day.

Other furniture in the living-room of a farmhouse or country inn consisted of a long oak table, often of Jacobean origin, perhaps discarded



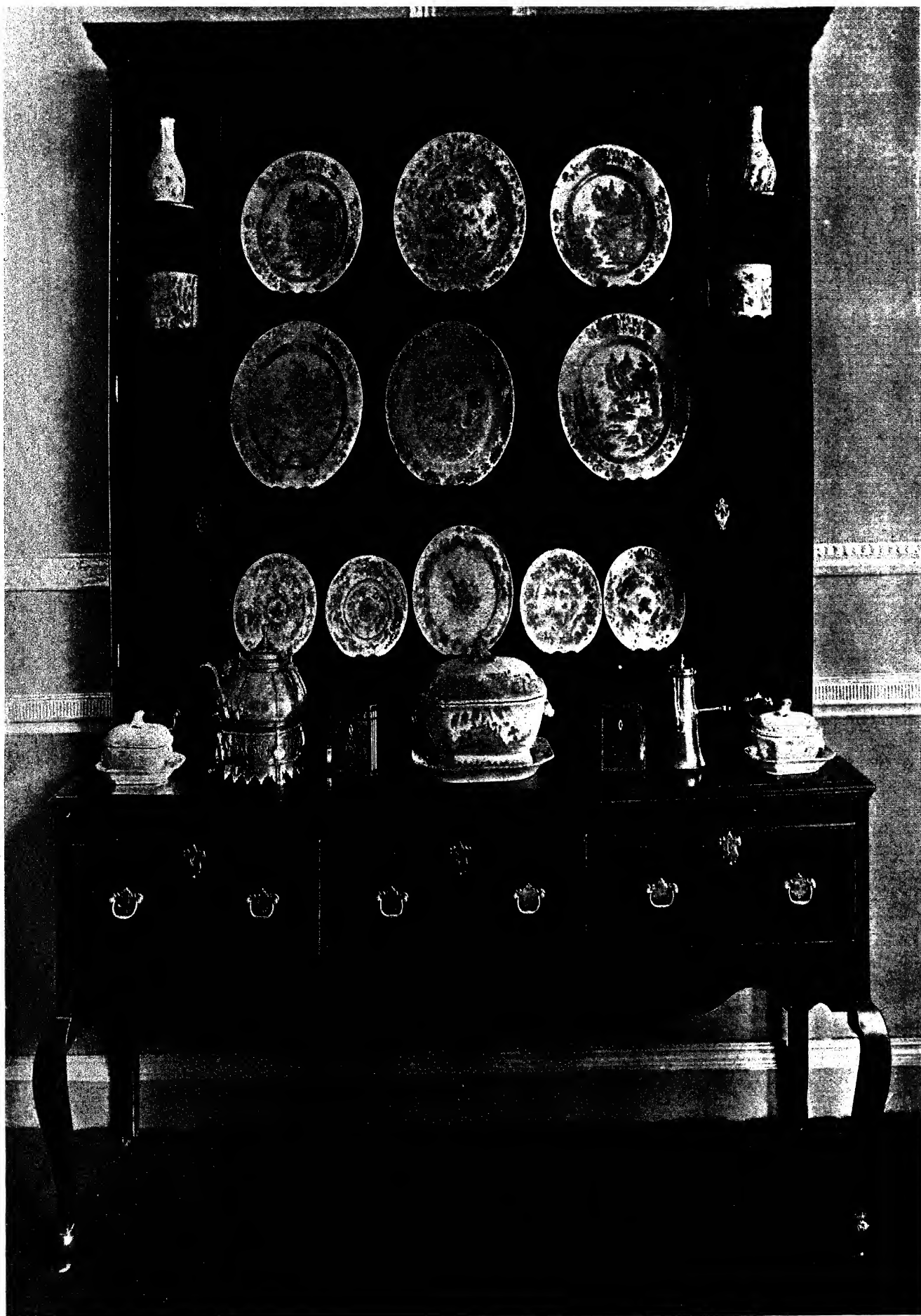


FIG. 94.—OAK DRESSER. Length, 6 feet; height, 7 feet.  
Property of PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

from a more important house, and a contemporary oak table with straight cylindrical legs united by stretchers. These were supplemented by a dresser of oak, either with or without a superstructure of shelves and cupboards, upon which earthenware plates and dishes were arranged, for by the date 1770 such commodities were commercially within the reach of modest householders.

Fig. 94 represents an oak dresser, the last evolution of the credence and court cupboard of earlier times, and made for the display of the pewter and crockery in daily use. The lower or side-table portion opens in three drawers, bordered with a cross-banding of mahogany outlined in a lighter wood; the legs are of clumsy cabriole shape, the lower rail uniting them being sawn to a waved outline; the upper portion is divided into shelves and two cupboards, the latter inlaid with a marqueterie shell. These dressers existed in great variety and were of common occurrence throughout the country; the colour of the oak is invariably light, as time has not yet toned it to a deeper brown. A corner cupboard and tall clock, made in the same style, often completed the furnishing of such rooms.

The chairs designed by Adam for Osterley, and made by Chippen-  
dale, are deeply interesting, not only from their character, but because they establish a date that is beyond question, for Horace Walpole, in a letter dated 1773, quoted on page 30, alludes to their existence at Osterley, and remarks upon the singularity of their shape.

In fig. 95, one of a set of twelve, the back-rail is trebly hooped and the uprights are perfectly plain, the splat being in the shape of a classical lyre, beautiful in its proportion and construction; the cords, of extreme delicacy, are also of mahogany. In these finely carved splats, the thickness is composed of layers of mahogany in three plies, which give strength and play to the back. The rest of the decoration on the chair is composed of flutings, the front legs being headed by the inevitable pateræ, without which no furniture of this period seemed complete.





FIG. 95.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 1 inch ;  
width of seat, 2 feet ; depth, 1 foot 4 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

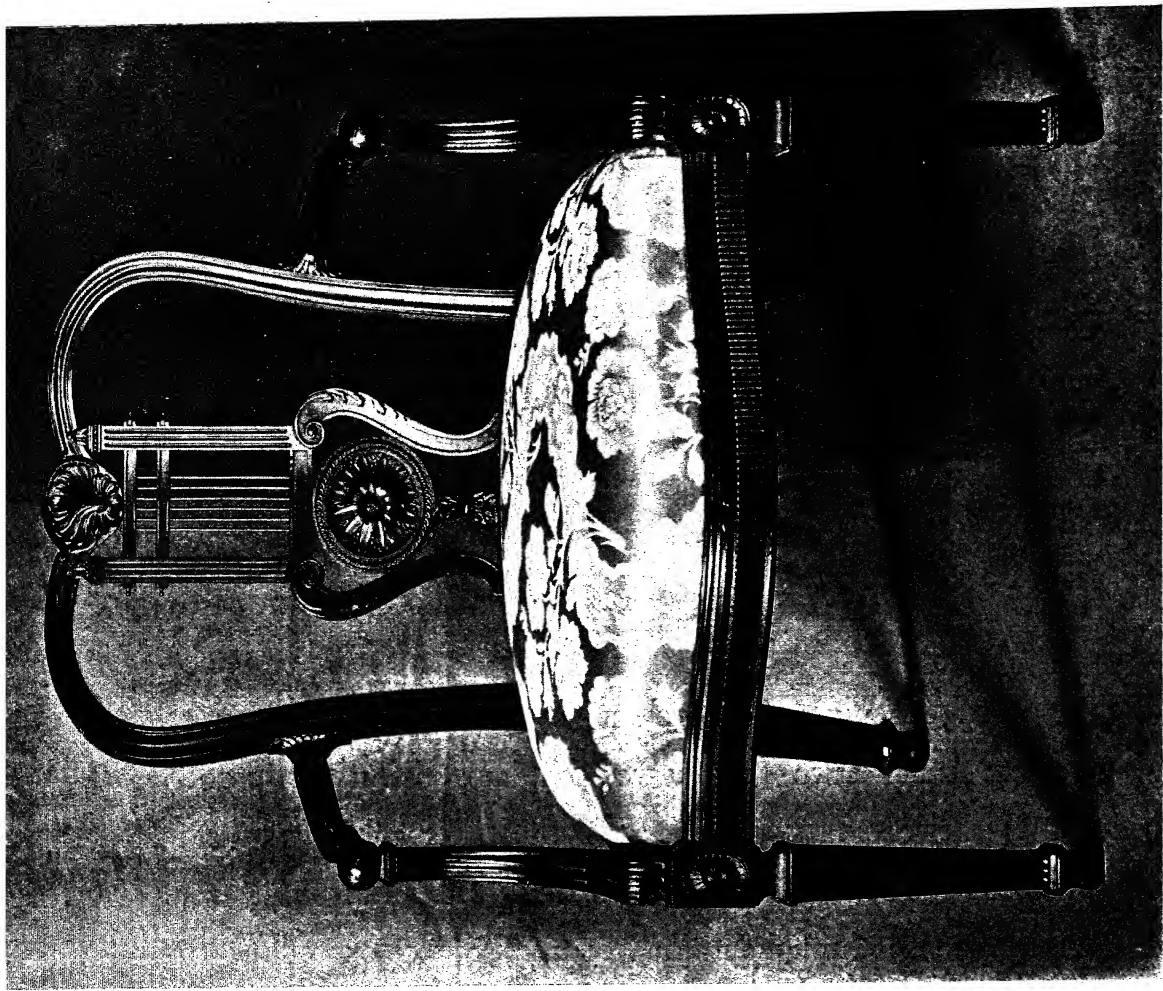


FIG. 96.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

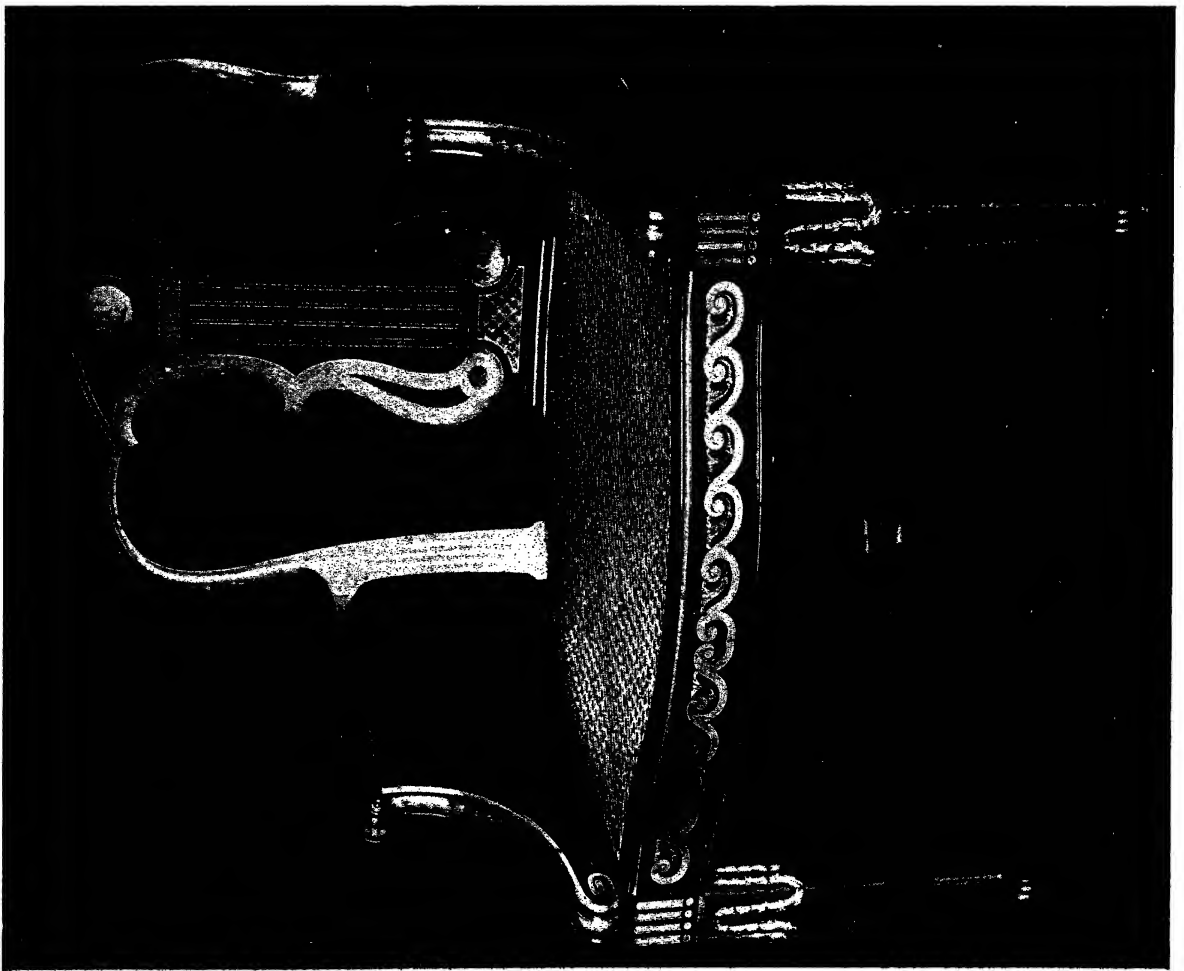


FIG. 97.—INLAID MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet 1 inch. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

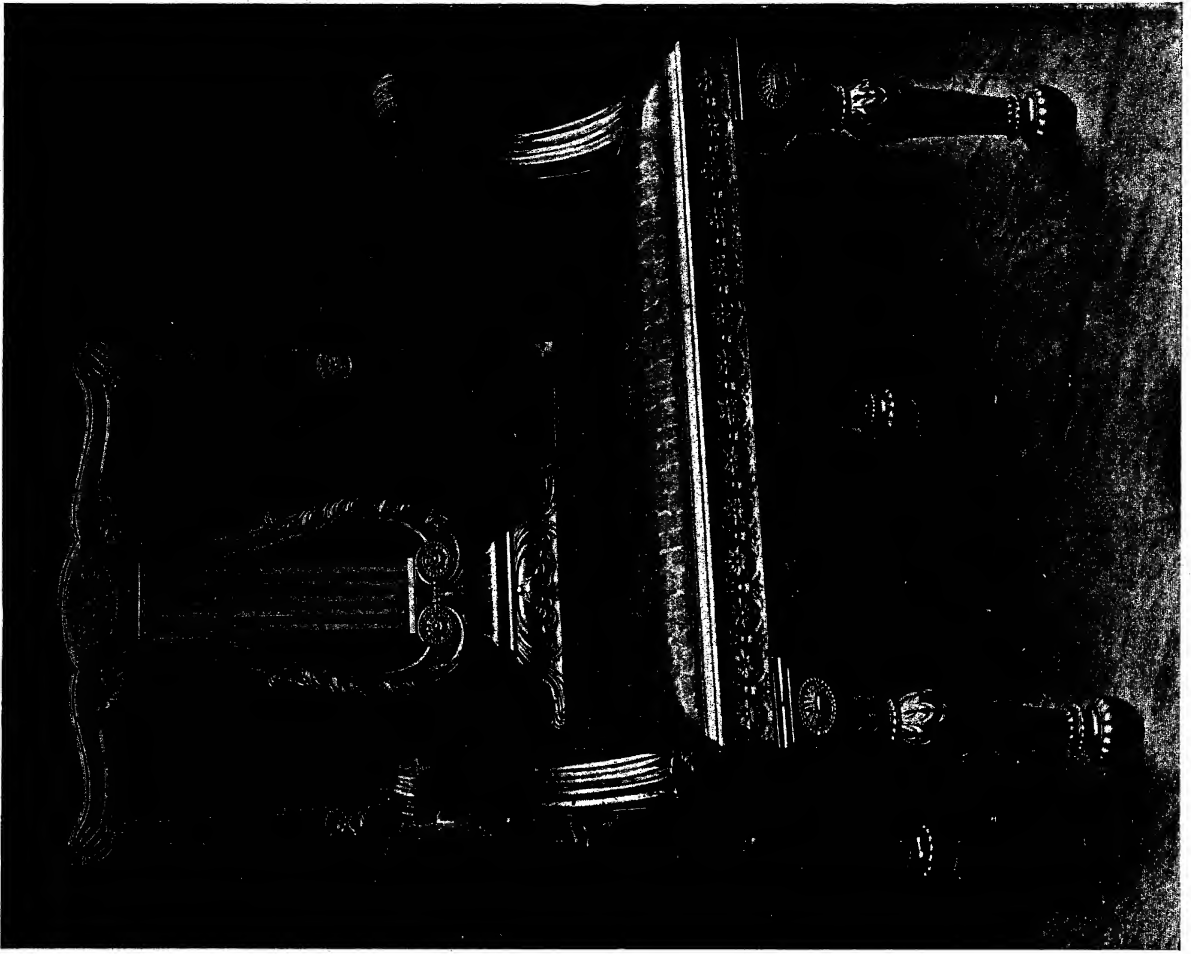


FIG. 98.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 1 inch.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

The hooped uprights of fig. 96 are fluted and centre in a shell; a vertical lyre supported on two S scrolls, enclosing a finely carved patera, forming the splat; the arms, legs, and seat-rail resemble the last specimen.

The beautiful inlaid chair (fig. 97) is one of a set matching the writing-table (fig. 45) from Osterley. The lyre-shaped splat is in this instance inlaid with tulip-wood and holly, and surmounted by a cameo of carved boxwood in place of a patera; the uprights, hooped rail, and arms being inlaid with pendants of garrya husks in brilliant green wood; the seat-rail is treated in the same manner, with a waved volute of holly-wood on a rosewood ground; the legs are veneered with similar woods and headed by festoons of gilt metal-work.

Another of these chairs, designed by the same hand, is fig. 98. Here the lyre occupies the entire splat, its base forming the shoe; the ornament is extremely simple and in the early style of Adam; the serpentine top rail, very rare to find in these chairs, shows a relapse towards a Chippendale shape, but the carving of the seat-rail and legs is in the most accurate manner of the new classical school. All four legs at this period are often treated cylindrically, and depart from the original square and taper form, thereby offering fresh opportunities to the carver. Such chairs are generally found with arms, sets being made in this manner. The next two chairs, although designed by Adam for Osterley, are quite distinct in motive from the preceding specimens, for the uprights and the top rail are straight, and all carving is dispensed with. In fig. 99, the surface, with the exception of the plain cylindrical legs, is inlaid with a classical design in bright green wood on a ground of mahogany banded with satin-wood; the splat is straight in outline and inlaid with a palmated design. The excellence of this inlay is shown by its condition on the rounded surface of the elbows. The other chair (fig. 100), one of a set for a room decorated in the Etruscan taste, has the splat shaped like a classical vase, and painting here takes the place of inlay.

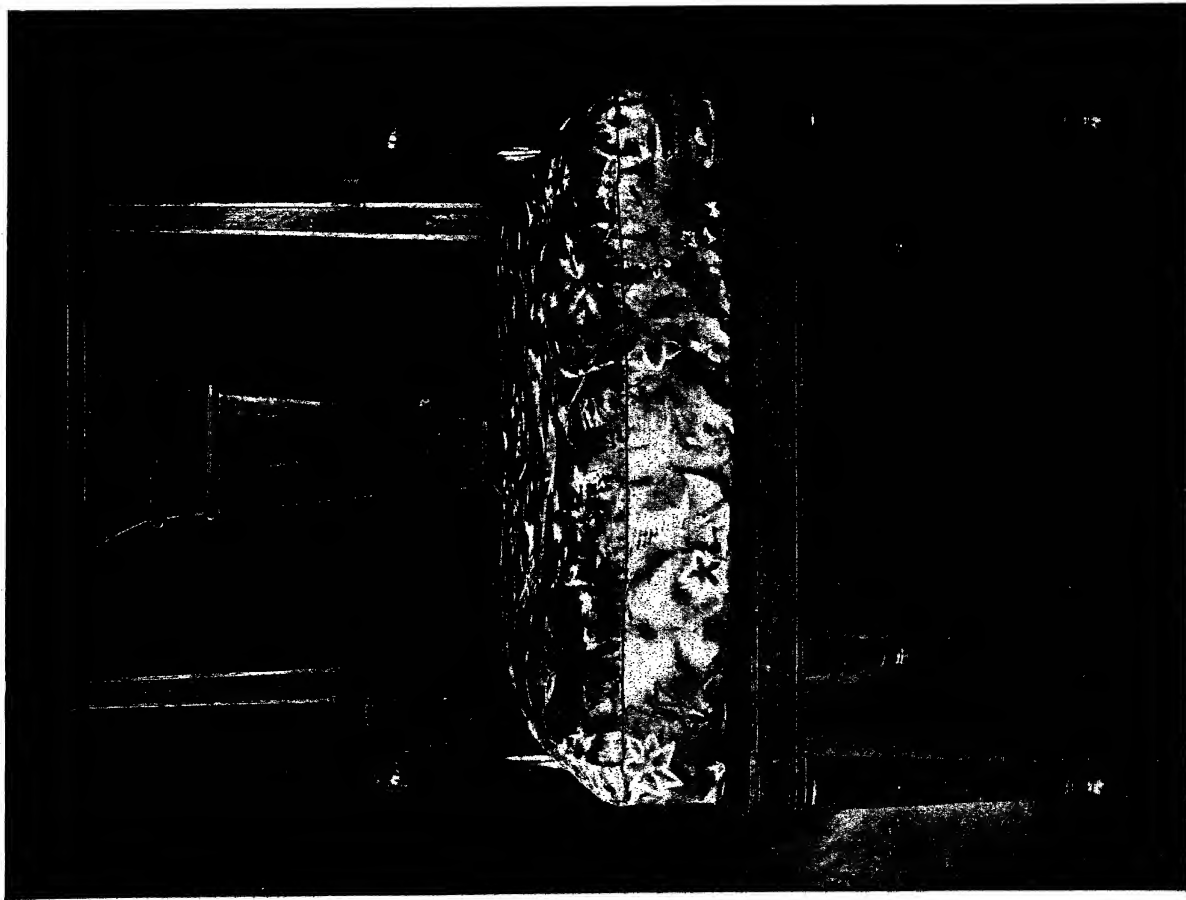


FIG. 99.—INLAID MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

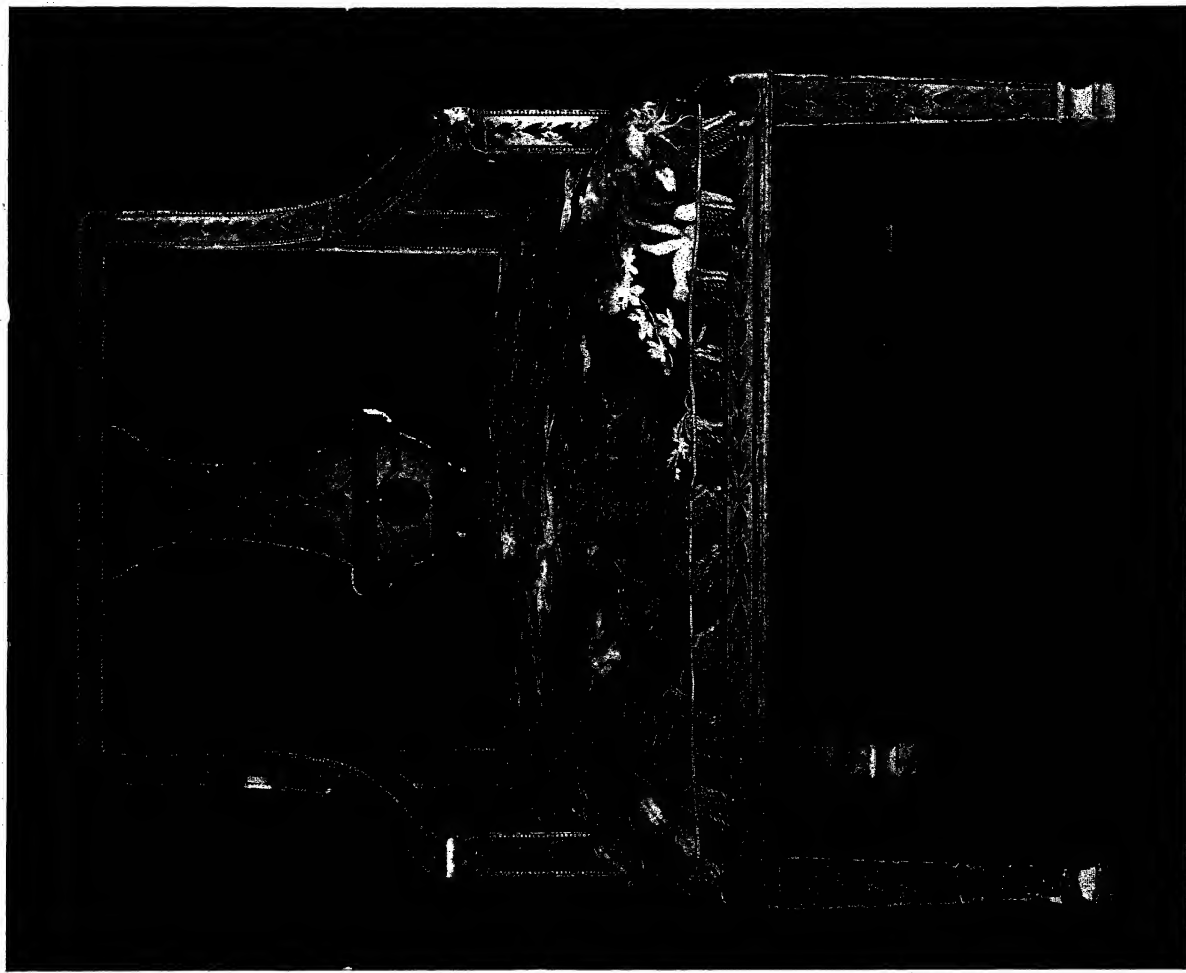


FIG. 100.—PAINTED ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

In many of the preceding specimens the seat coverings are of the original horse-hair or leather, and it may be presumed that chairs about 1770 were largely covered in these materials, for the occupation of working covers for furniture had been superseded by the introduction of tapestry for this purpose from France, and a great deal of silk was also used for drawing-room sofas and chairs. It is certain that Adam made constant use of silk, and took the trouble to select or design suitable pieces for his furniture, as little cuttings of the materials chosen by him for its upholstery are in many cases still attached to his original drawings. But whatever the cause may have been, there was a temporary decline in the fashion for needlework coverings after the date 1770.

Occasionally a coarser woolwork, with a trellis pattern enclosing a flower, is found on 'grandfather' chairs and others of the above date. The interesting example (fig. 101), one of a set painted green and white, is covered with this trellis needlework. The back is transitional in design, being a dislocated version of the honeysuckle pattern and centres in an escutcheon; the legs belong to the taste of the previous ten years. Fig. 102, although far more correct in style and some years later in date, has not quite the same picturesque appearance, but the seat covering is of the same work and design, and the chair is decorated in white and gold. This coarse woolwork not being of the same consistency and durability as the earlier and smaller stitch, is consequently seldom found in good condition, and the want of careful execution shows that this industry was no longer fashionable.

In France the adoption of tapestry in upholstering chairs and sofas, as well as the later invention called 'parfilage,' no doubt put an end for a time to needlework coverings. This 'parfilage' was called in England drizzling, and obtained much favour here. In the *Life of Caroline Bauer* we read that it was invented at the Court of Versailles, during the reign of Louis XVI., and was in vogue there for ten years. In pursuing this amusement, the most fashionable ladies of the Court felt no

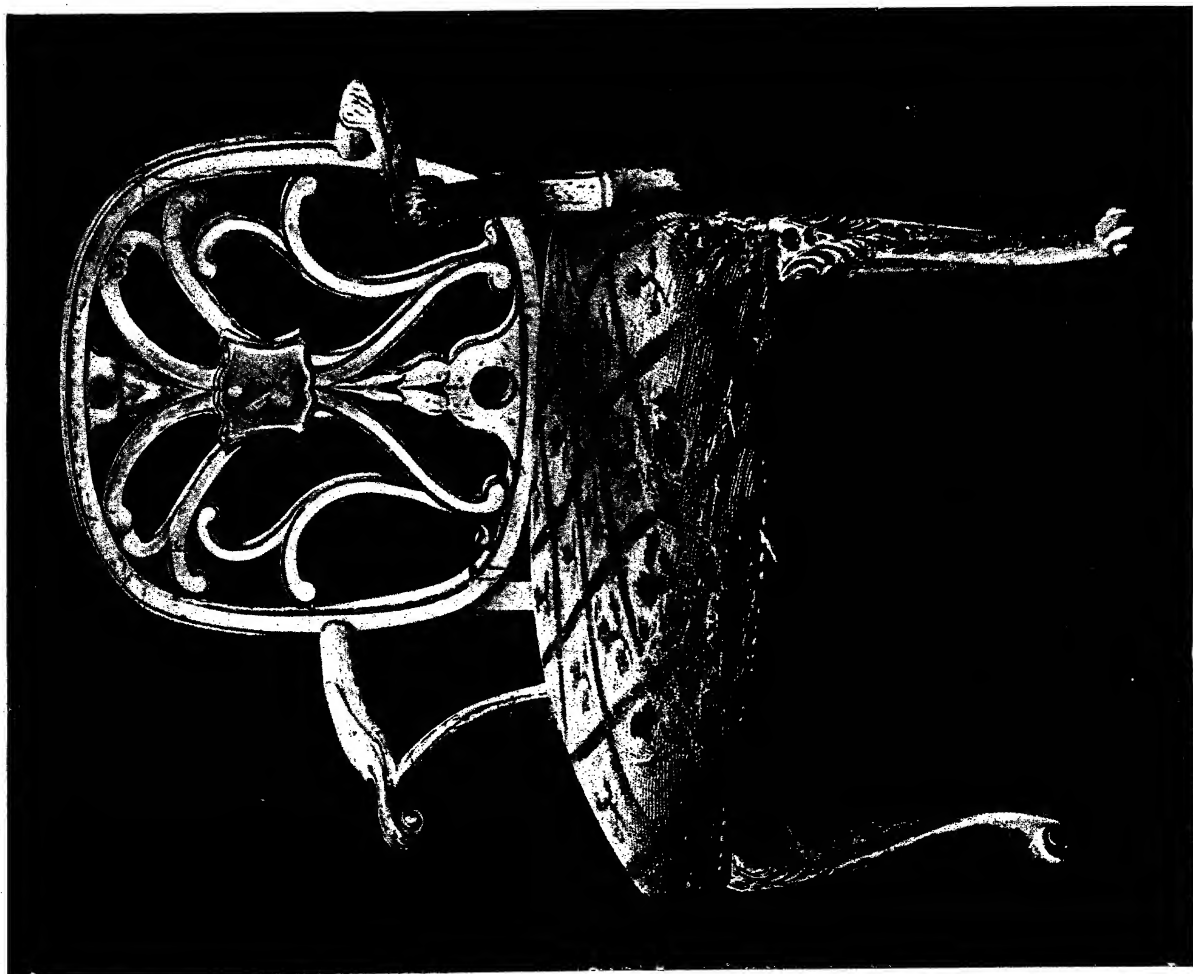


FIG. 101.—PAINTED ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 1 inch.  
Property of MESSRS. ISAACS.

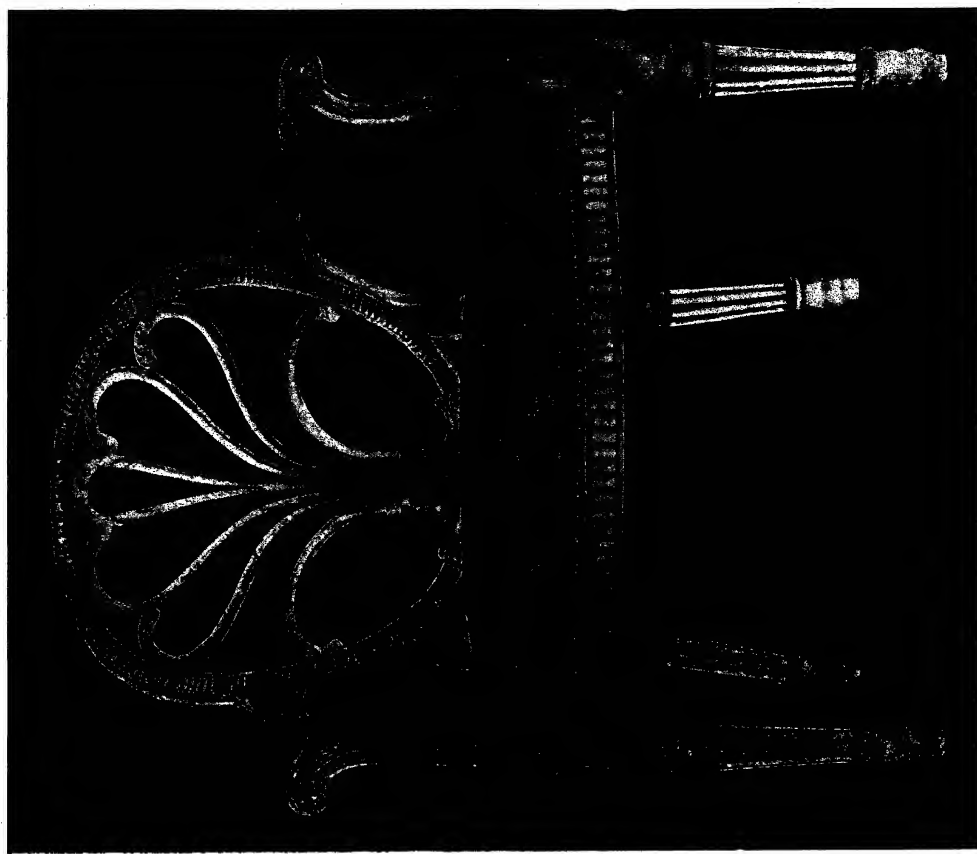


FIG. 102.—PAINTED ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

compunction in asking gentlemen of their acquaintance for cast-off gold and silver epaulettes, hilt bands, galloons, and tassels, with which all dresses at that time were overloaded. They took these with them to every entertainment, and there picked out the gold and silver threads, and finally sold them. If a lover wished to please his mistress, he did not give her flowers, perfumes, finery, and jewelled trinkets, but presented her

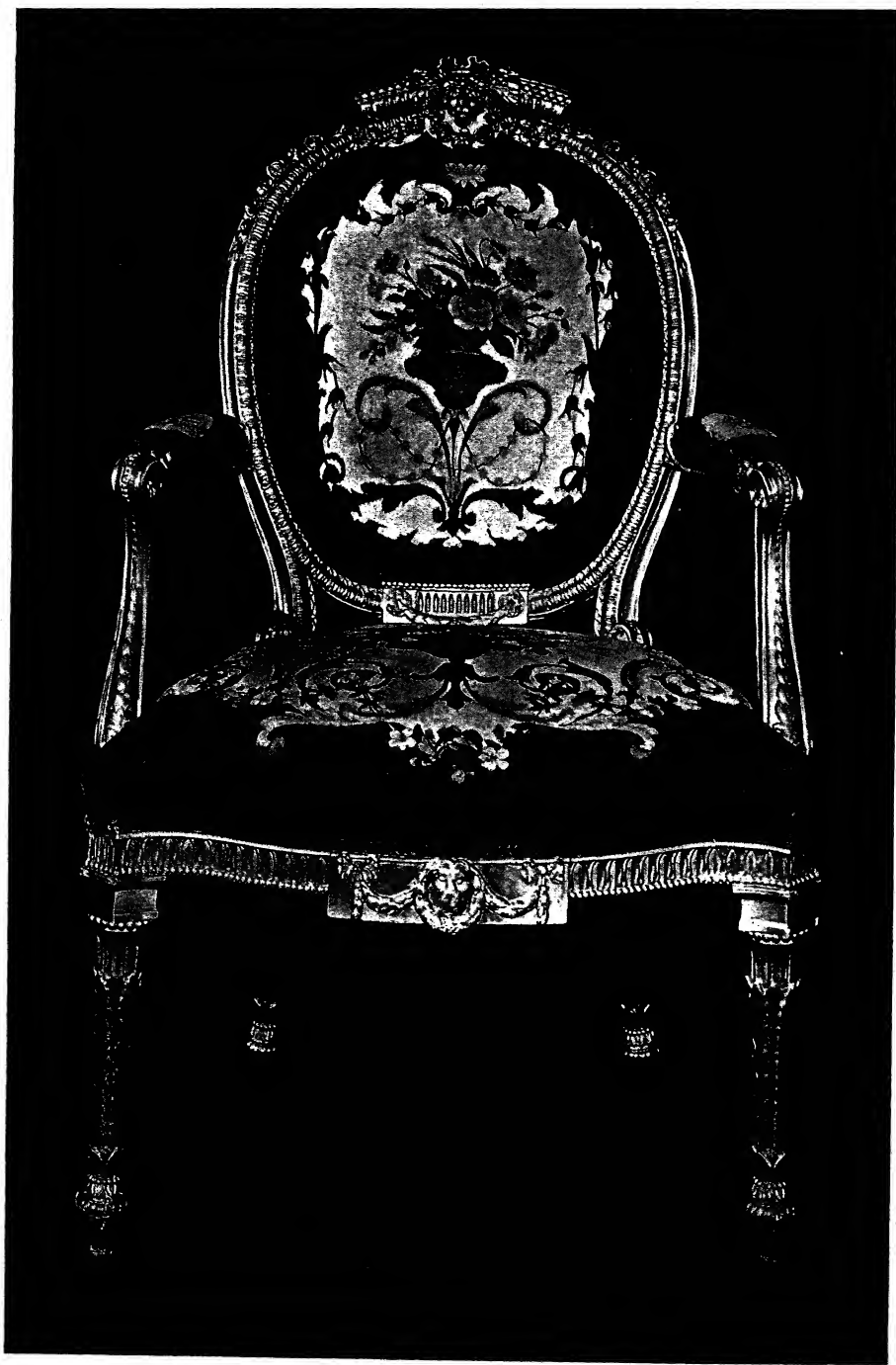


FIG. 103.—GILT ARM-CHAIR COVERED IN TAPESTRY. Height, 3 feet 2 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

with dozens of gold tassels and other objects spun over with gold thread. These gold-thread pickers were called 'parfileuses' from the word *parfiler*. A 'parfileuse' would take with her into 'company,' and even to Court, a huge picking-bag for all the galloons and tassels received from gentlemen, and she was proudest who took home with her the best-filled bag. A beautiful and bold parfileuse would make over one hundred louis d'or a year by this extortion. At the New Year the customary presents given by gentlemen to ladies consisted of parfilage, and when betting with them they no longer staked so many louis d'or but so many tassels for picking. On one occasion the Countess de Genlis took from the Duc de Coigny four-and-twenty gold tassels, each worth twenty francs, because she had won a wager that she would walk up the steps of an aqueduct. In the evening she distributed these tassels amongst the ladies present because she hated the nuisance of parfilage. Mme. de Genlis, by her sarcasms on drizzling in *Adèle and Theodore*, put an effective stop to this disgraceful fashion, and ladies were no more seen in society demanding gold lace from gentlemen, and Mme. Bauer goes on to say, 'took once again to embroidery and the divers kinds of needlework which had once agreeably whiled away the time of our mothers and grandmothers.'

Although parfilage had gone out of fashion in France as early as 1782, it continued to exist in England under the name of drizzling for a generation after. The tortoise-shell and other small cylindrical boxes to which we are sometimes puzzled to assign a use were probably the cases to contain the tools necessary for this pursuit.

The French tapestry-coverings that took the place of needlework were much used in this country for chairs and sofas of Adam design. There is a room at Osterley hung with Rose du Barri tapestry, the furniture being covered with the same. At Harewood are two sets of sofas and chairs similarly upholstered. All this tapestry is in perfect condition, the ground being of a full rose colour, brilliant, as at the time of manufacture. These chairs, invariably oval-backed, with cylindrical carved legs, took the

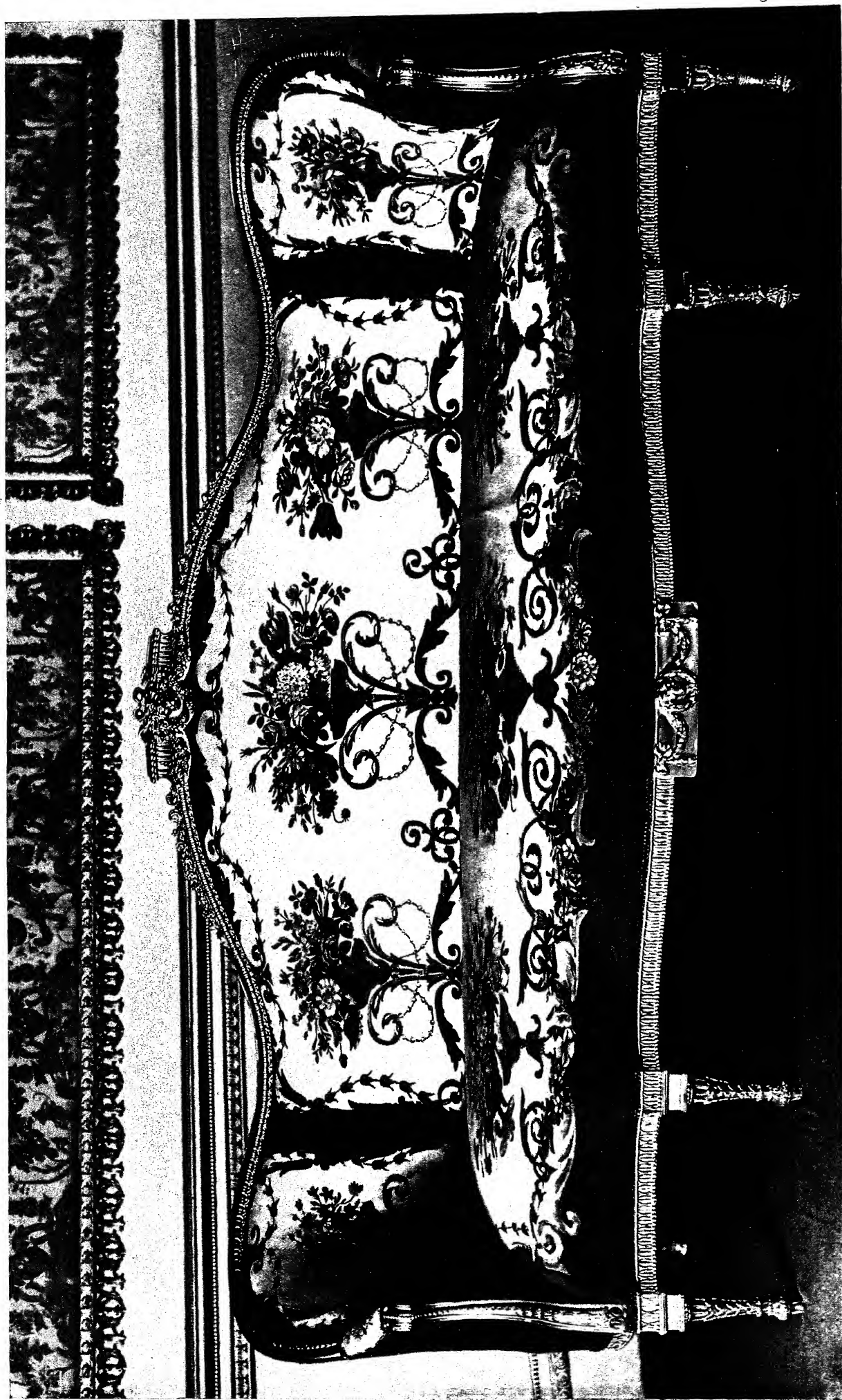


FIG. 104.—GILT SOFA COVERED WITH ROSE DU BARRI TAPESTRY. Length, 6 feet 6 inches; height, 3 feet 3 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

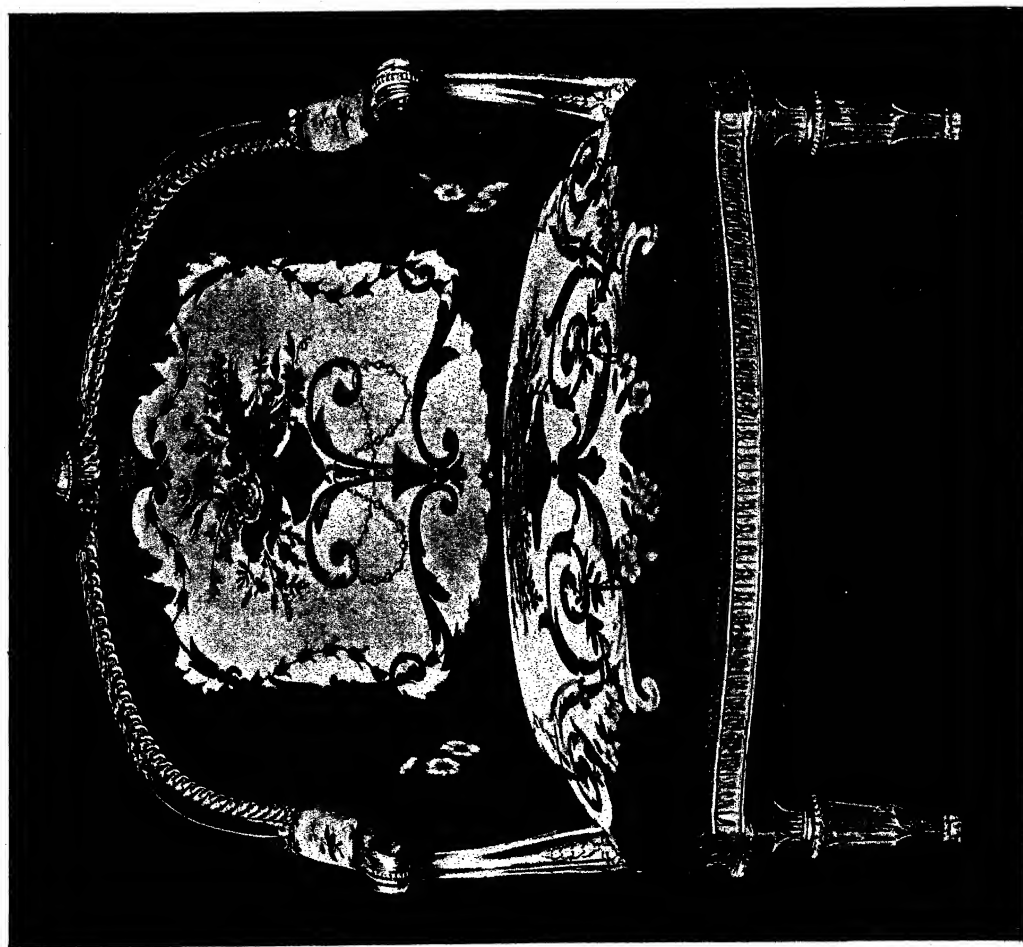


FIG. 105.—BERGÈRE CHAIR COVERED IN ROSE DU  
BARRI TAPESTRY. Height, 3 feet 2 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

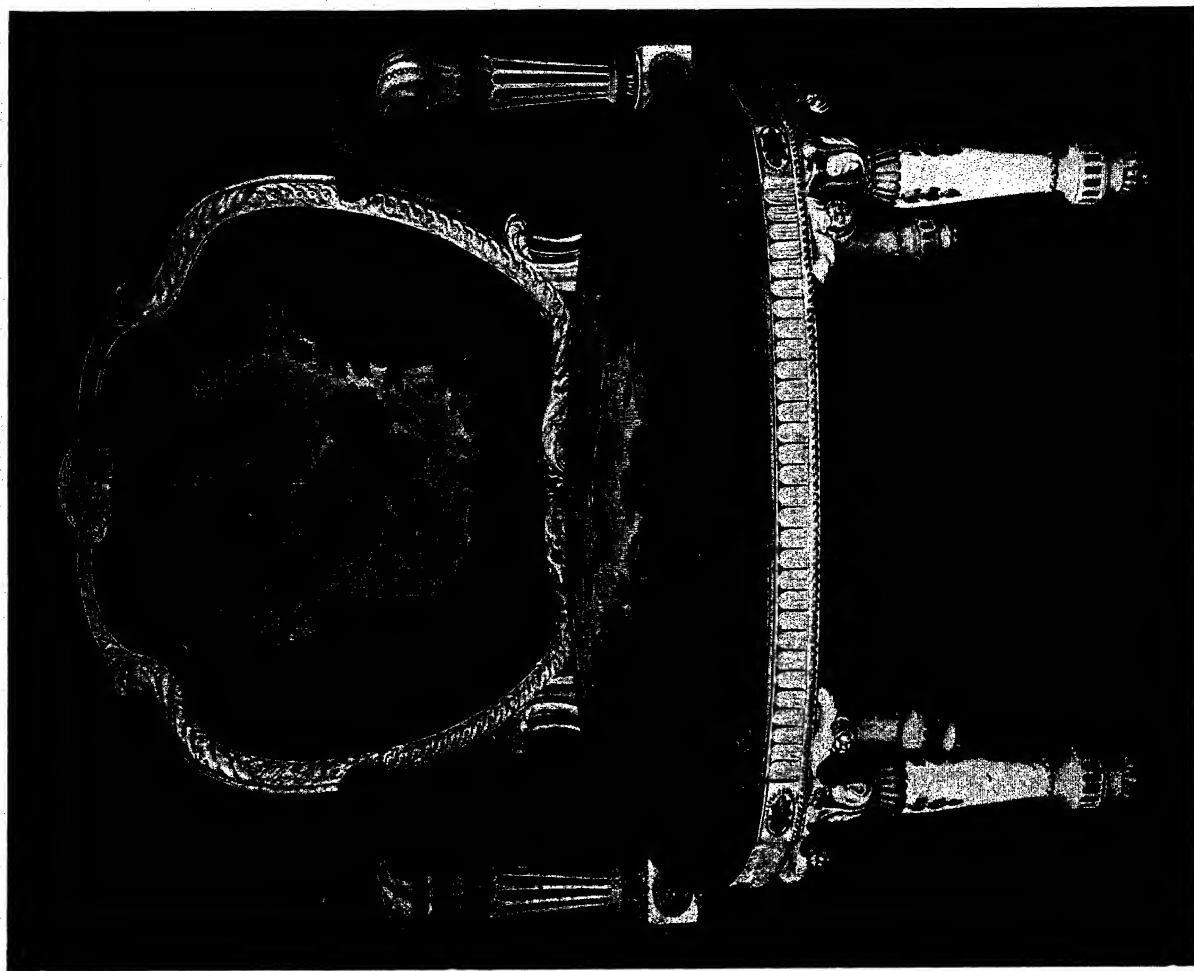


FIG. 106.—WHITE AND GOLD ARM-CHAIR COVERED  
IN ROSE DU BARRI TAPESTRY. Height, 3 feet 1 inch.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

place of the so-called French chair of Chippendale, their shape being adapted by Adam from the Louis xvi. taste.

Fig. 103 is from a large set made in this manner. The general treatment is in the contemporary French style, but the scale of detail is larger than that generally found in Louis xvi. furniture of this quality, whilst the design of the legs and seat-rail are very clearly English. The cresting is somewhat confused and purposeless, but the strings of roses starting from the lion's mask and edging the shoulders of the oval are beautiful; the legs in their carving represent the metal-work of the palm-leaved character so often found on the rosewood and inlaid furniture already described. The woodwork of this chair is gilt so richly that it resembles solid metal. The tapestry is Aubusson, representing vases of flowers on buff panels, surrounded by a ground of intense Rose du Barri. Matching these chairs are two sofas (fig. 104), covered in the same manner, and some chairs of the shape called bergère (fig. 105), which differ from the sofas in their ornament. Both sets are gilt, and the effect of this gold and tapestry in its original brilliant condition is rare and remarkable.

In fig. 106, a tapestry-covered chair of about 1780 from another set at Harewood, the back is more shield-shaped than oval, and the arm-supports repeat the form of the legs, giving a somewhat disjointed effect. The carving does not call for any particular comment, except at the junction of the legs and seat-rail, where the ordinary square block is discarded in favour of foliated scrolls terminating in small quatrefoils, a florid detail that is somewhat out of place. These chairs are painted white, the ornament being gilt. The tapestry is a deep full rose, upon which are bouquets and garlands of flowers in brilliant colours on a cream-coloured panel.

The design of the graceful chair (fig. 107) exists at the Soane Museum. It is from a set at Osterley and earlier in date than the last specimen. The oval of the back is concave and connected to the seat by

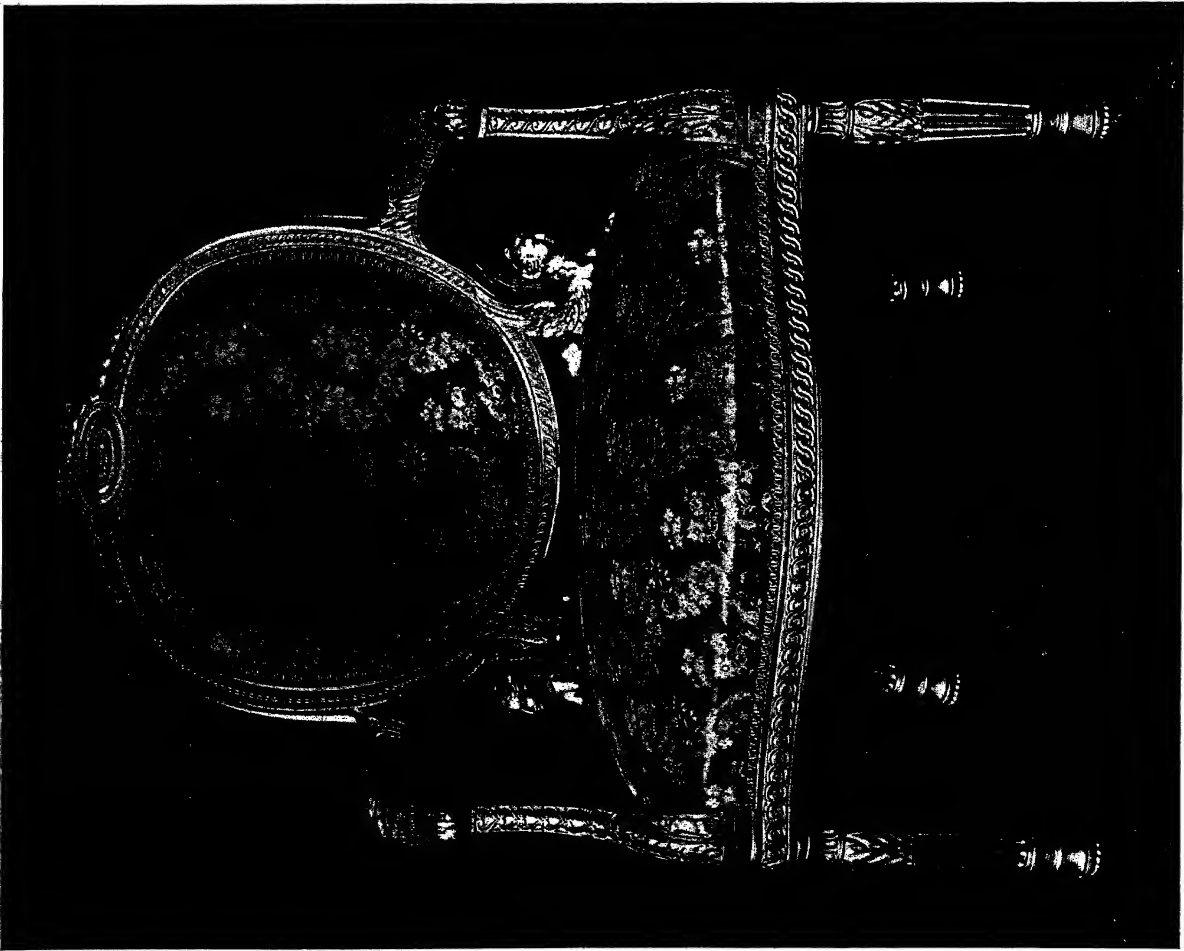


FIG. 107.—GILT ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 1 inch.  
Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

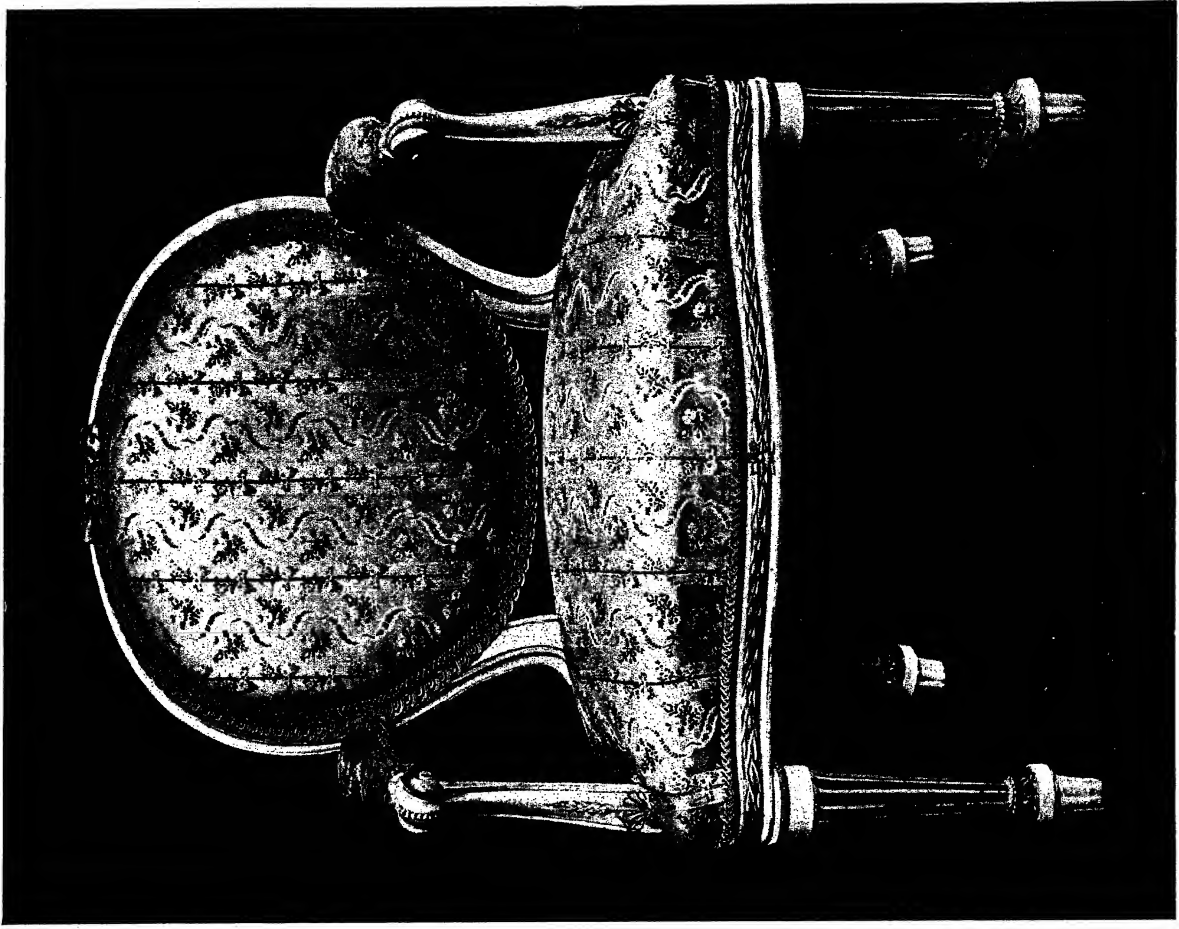


FIG. 108.—WHITE AND GOLD ARM-CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet. Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

two sphinxes of fine execution ; the legs are slight, the feet being small and unobtrusive ; the ornament throughout is in the full style of Adam, sphinxes being a very characteristic detail of his work at this period. The original covering was probably of cut velvet or silk, now replaced by a modern fabric.

Fig. 108 is very similar, and from a set at Nostell Priory designed by Adam on purely French lines for that house. The decoration is in white and gold and of simple character, and represents the ordinary upholstered drawing-room chair of this time. The original covering has been replaced by a modern silk. It is very evident that by the date 1780 painted chairs were popular in taste, and that many makers adopted the coloured decoration on furniture introduced by Adam. A graceful arm-chair of about this time is shown on Plate VII. The low sweep of the arms introduces a fresh motive that carries out the light construction, and the introduction of colour emphasises the delicate lines that would be lost in plain mahogany. For this reason the fanciful satin-wood chair on the same plate benefits from the light and golden colour of the wood, and its small proportions gain in value from the assertive properties of the material. Its date is between 1785 and 1790, and as Robert Adam did not die until 1792, it is probable that the rather unusual design of this specimen can be assigned to his work.

Although the coverings on some of the preceding examples are without doubt French, there was a manufactory of tapestry at Fulham as late as 1755, and at other places in London at a still later date. Muntz, in his *History of Tapestry from the earliest Times until the present Day*, states that Peter Parisot, a naturalised Frenchman, had an establishment at Paddington for the manufacture of this fabric, which he afterwards removed to Fulham, and adds :—

‘The manufacture of Parisot consisted of tapestry-weaving after the manner of the Gobelins, and carpet-weaving in the style of Chaillet, besides dye-works. Connected with the manufactory there was a school of practical art, for a great number of artists of



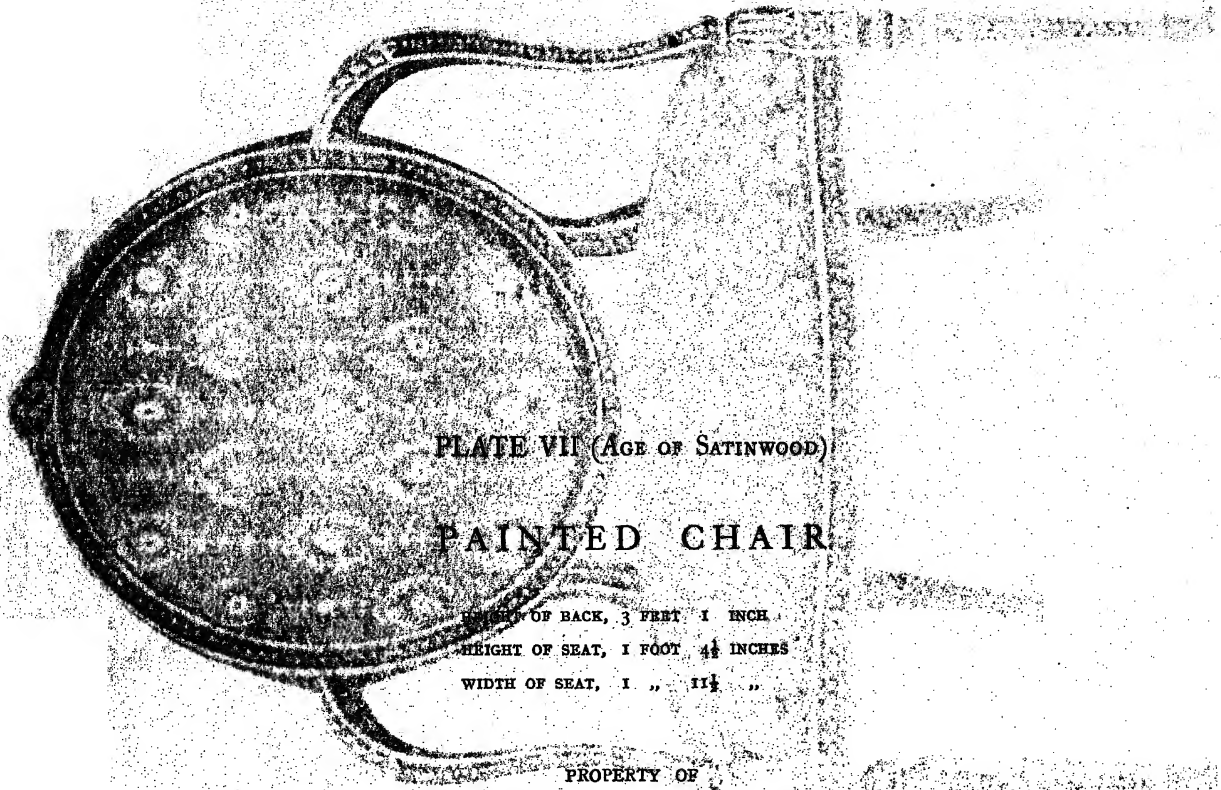


PLATE VII (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

PAINTED CHAIR

HEIGHT OF BACK, 3 FEET 1 INCH

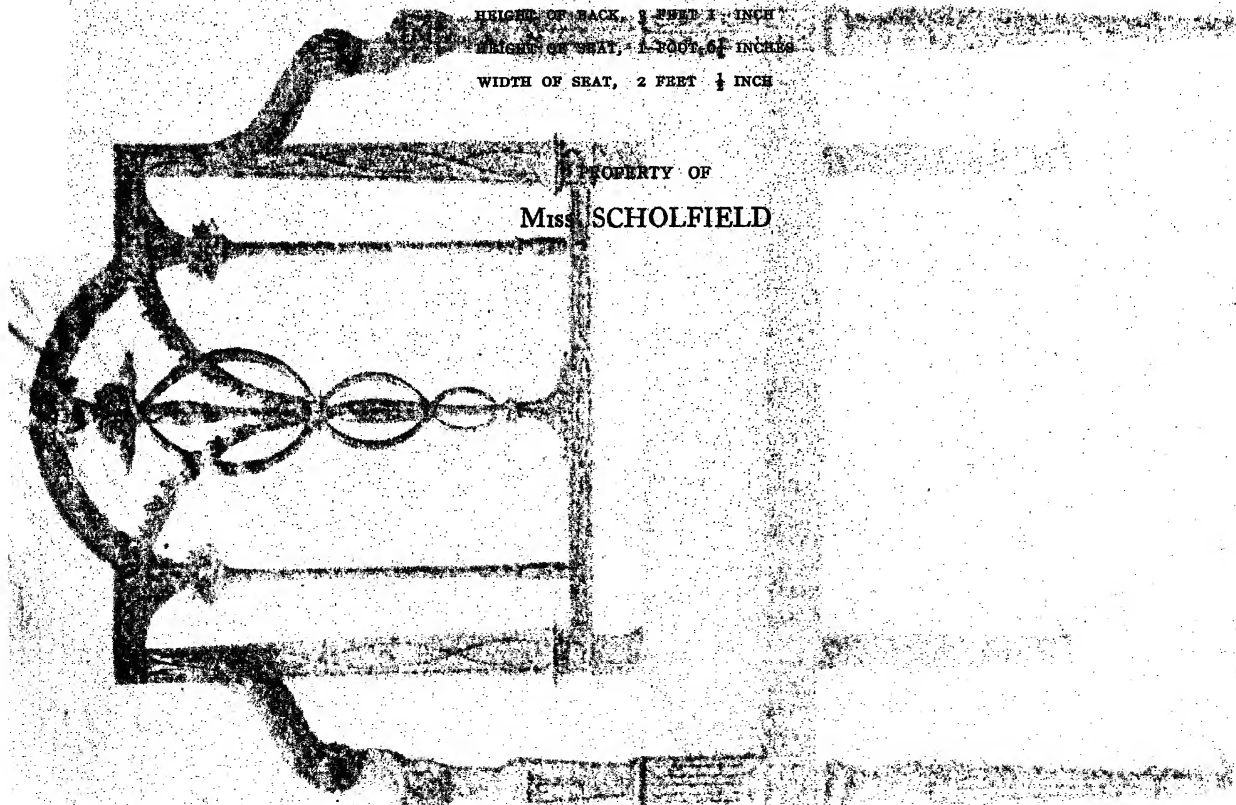
HEIGHT OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 4 1/2 INCHES

WIDTH OF SEAT, 1 " 11 1/2 "

PROPERTY OF

THE HON. MRS. WHITAKER

SATINWOOD CHAIR



HEIGHT OF BACK, 3 FEET 1 INCH

HEIGHT OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 6 INCHES

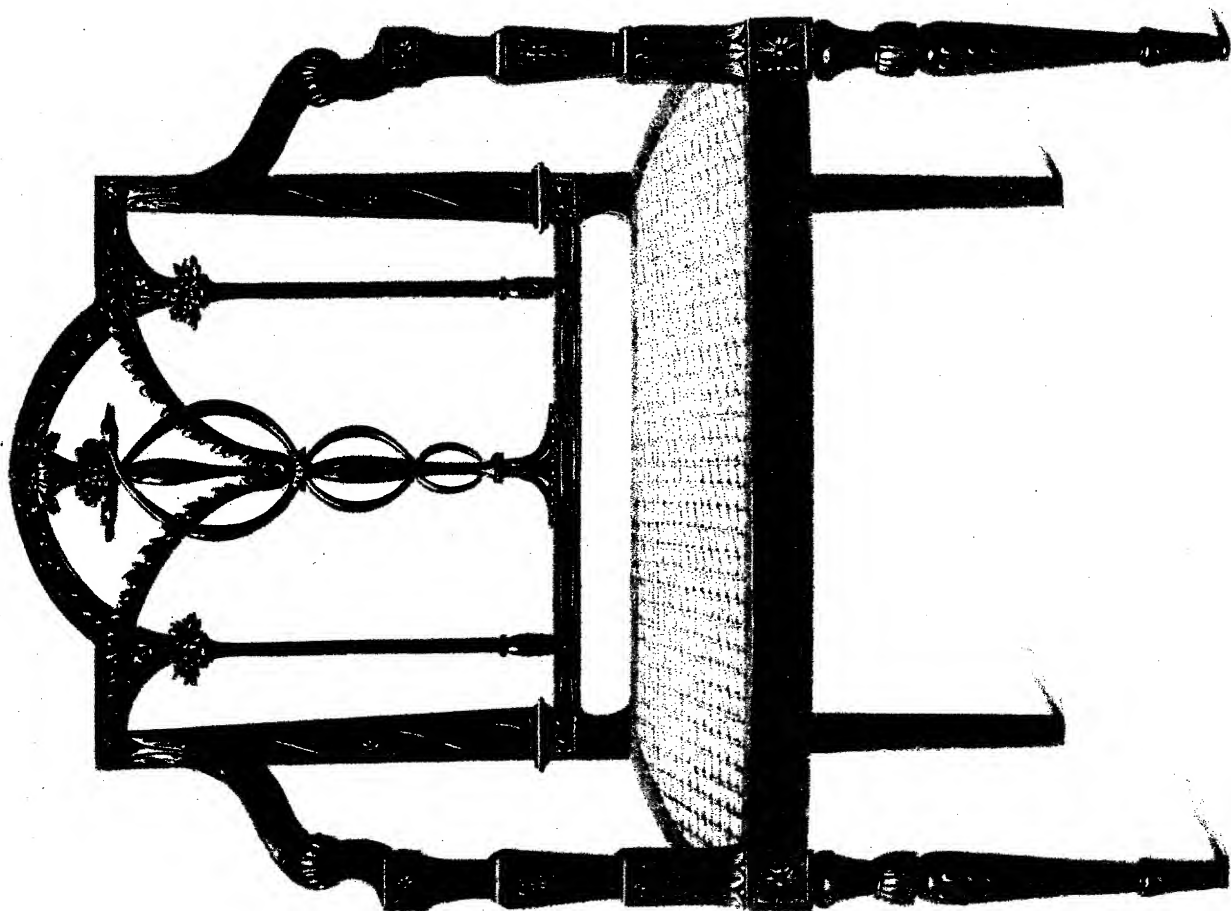
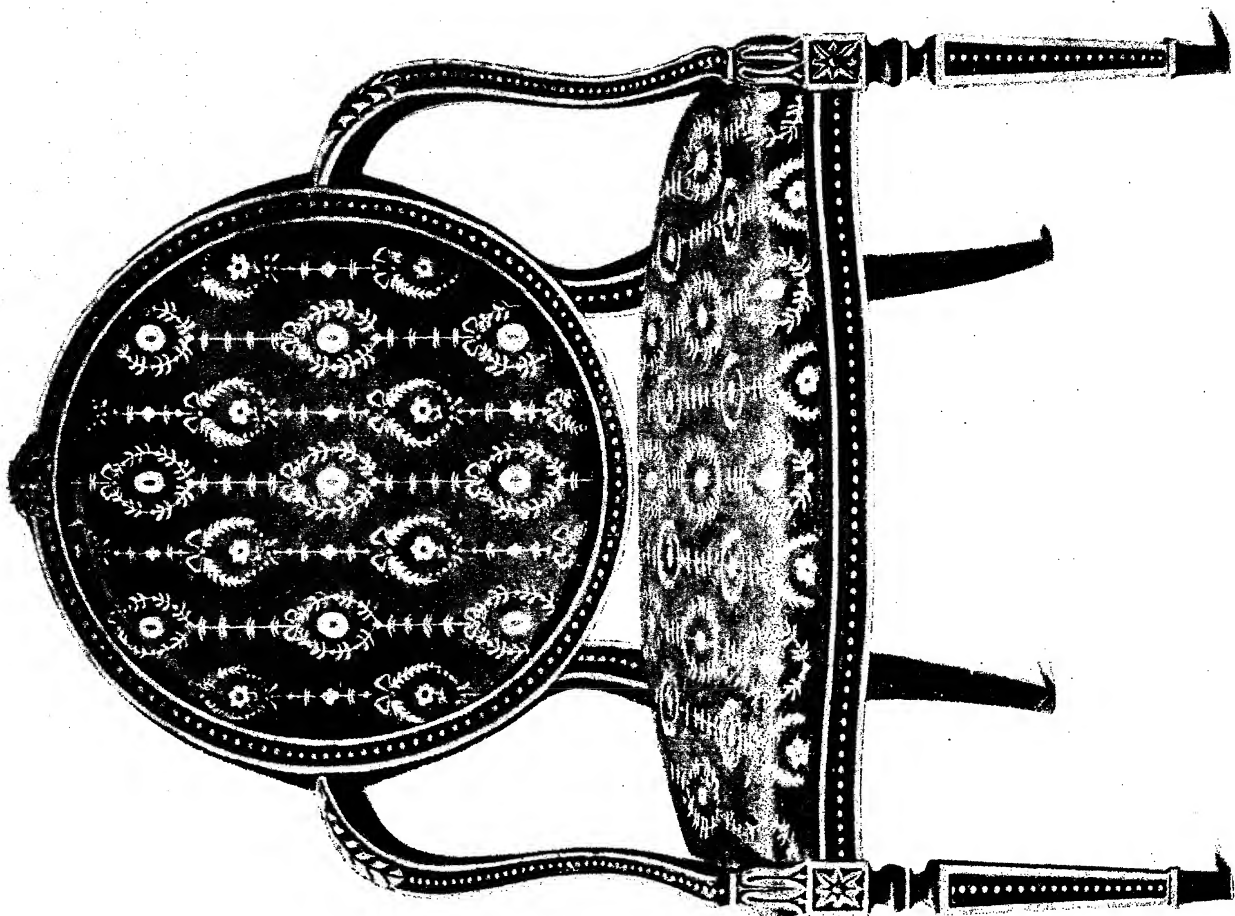
WIDTH OF SEAT, 2 FEET 1/2 INCH

PROPERTY OF

MISS SCHOLFIELD









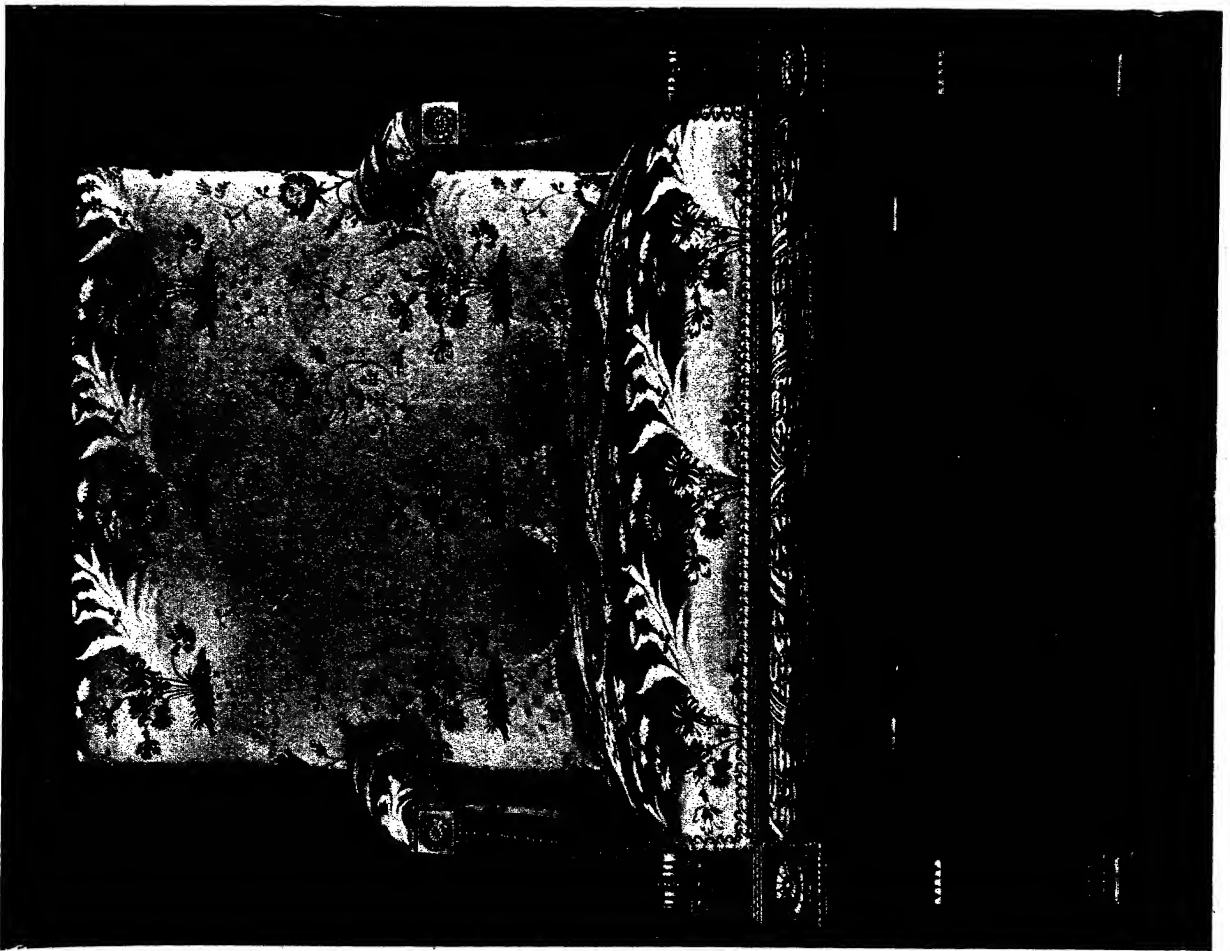


FIG. 109.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 6 inches; width of seat, 2 feet 6 inches. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

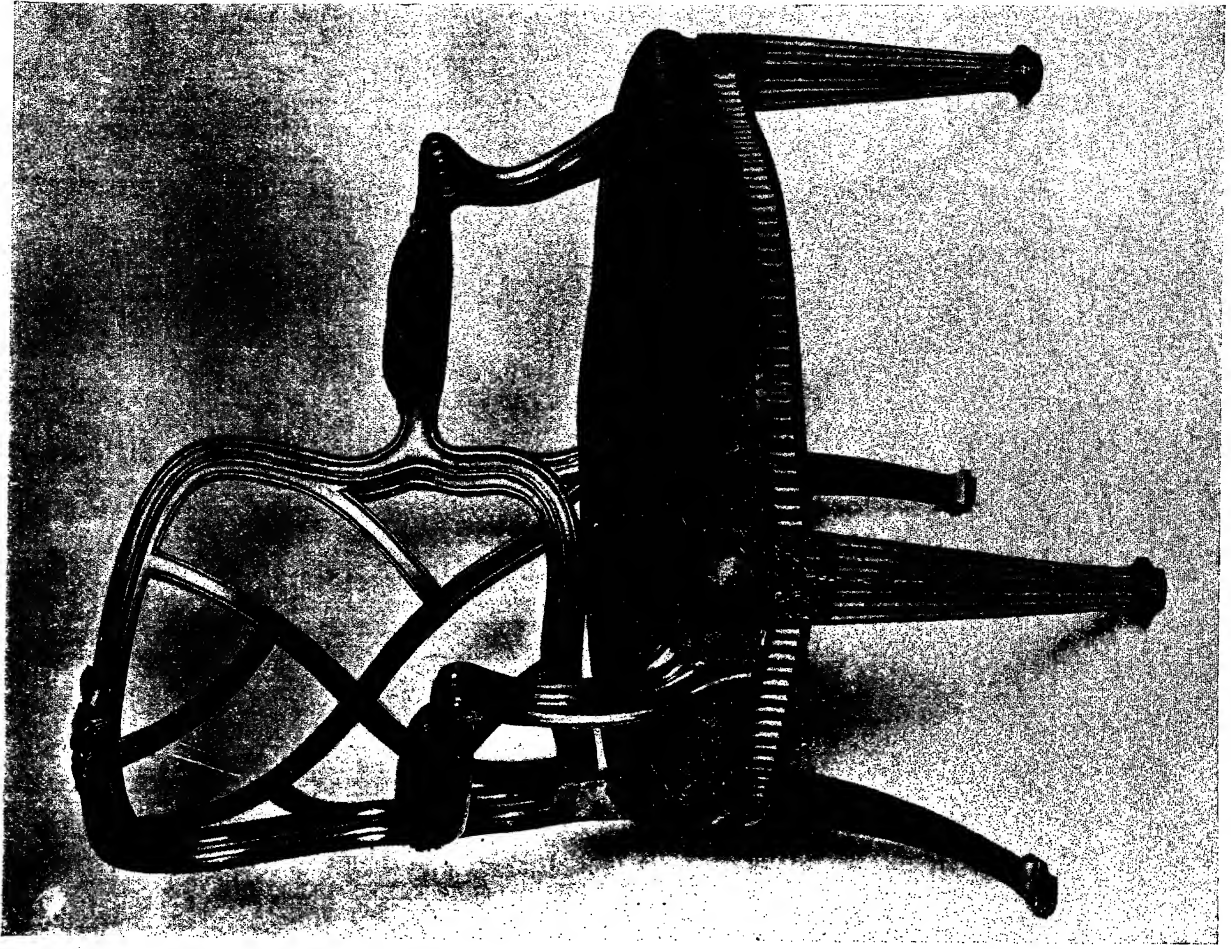


FIG. 110.—MAHOGANY ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet. Property of VISCOUNT ENFIELD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

both sexes and for such young people as might be sent to learn the arts of drawing, weaving, dyeing, and other branches of the work. Parisot states that he employed a hundred workmen, but the success of the manufactory was short-lived, although it was under the powerful patronage of the Duke of Cumberland, and countenanced by other members of the Royal family. Doddington, Baron of Melcombe Regis, writes in his diary that he went to see the manufacture of tapestry from France, set up at Fulham by the Duke: "The work, both of the Gobelins and of Chaillot, called Gavonnerie, was very fine but very dear." Parisot published a pamphlet describing the manufactory in glowing terms, but the catalogue announcing the sale of all the stock, etc., in 1755, is sufficient comment.'

This catalogue gives valuable information of the kind of tapestries woven in the Fulham manufactory :—

'A catalogue of the entire works of the Fulham Manufactory, consisting of beautiful tapestry hangings, large and small carpets, screens, backs, and seats for chairs, etc. All finished in the highest perfection after the manner of the Royal Manufactories at Chaillot and the Gobelins at Paris. Several of the pieces are made by English apprentices instructed in the new establishment brought into the kingdom under the patronage of His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland.'

The sale took place on 30th April 1755, and the following is an abridgment of the list of articles :—

- 'A great many of these items include coverings for the backs of chairs such as—
  - '8 seats for stools after the manner of Chaillot.
  - 'A pattern for a screen or French chair after the manner of Chaillot.
  - 'A seat for a French chair, with poppies in a yellow ground, and 6 backs for chairs—Gobelin.
  - '4 patterns for large French chairs, with a parrot eating fruit—Gobelin.
  - '11 large chair seats, with curious baskets of flowers—Gobelin's work,' etc., etc.

In addition to the Fulham manufactory, London was the scene of many other small tapestry-weaving establishments during the middle of the eighteenth century. There is a set of tapestries belonging to the Duke of Northumberland, woven in Soho in 1759 from designs by Francesco Zuccharelli. Hatton Garden was also the scene of another workshop.

These English tapestry backs and seats were sometimes used upon such chairs as fig. 109, and the earlier 'French chairs' of Chippendale.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

In this example, made for Osterley about 1770, the distribution of the decoration is reticent, with the sense of solid construction that marks all Adam-Chippendale furniture. The carved laurelled bands that frame the seat-rails relieve the sense of severity that would otherwise be apparent, and the classical plinths forming the feet are doubtless the most pleasing and practical finish ever introduced on these legs. The ordinary covering to such chairs would have been in horse-hair or leather. Another form of arm-chair, with a concave back of open trellis, is shown in fig. 110; here the upper portion is French and serpentine in line, whilst the legs are of the bold, vertical Adam type. Great comfort and strength is obtained by this combination, although the mixture of styles is not quite successful.

The mahogany sofas that accompanied the Adam chairs were extremely severe, for those with serpentine and flowing lines, which have been already described, were always of soft wood gilt or painted in white and colour, or white and gold, and resembled fig. 104 more or less in their lines.

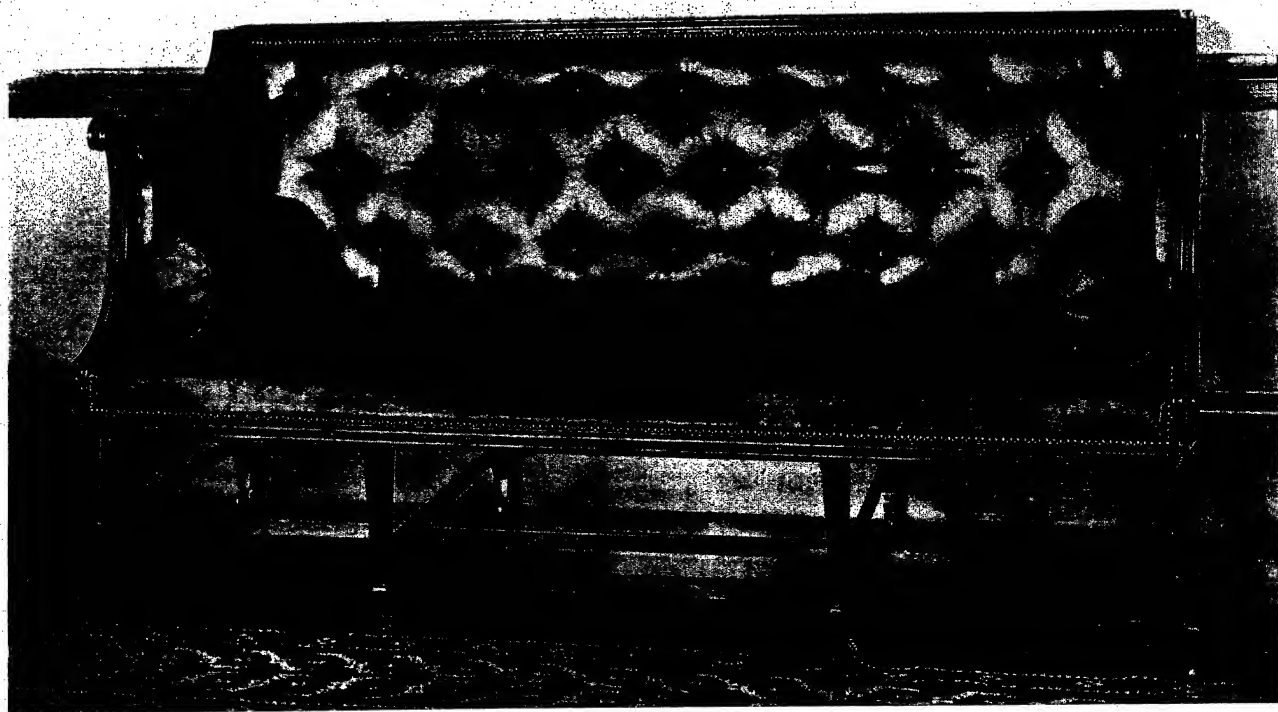


FIG. 111.—MAHOGANY SOFA. Length, 7 feet; height, 3 feet 3 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



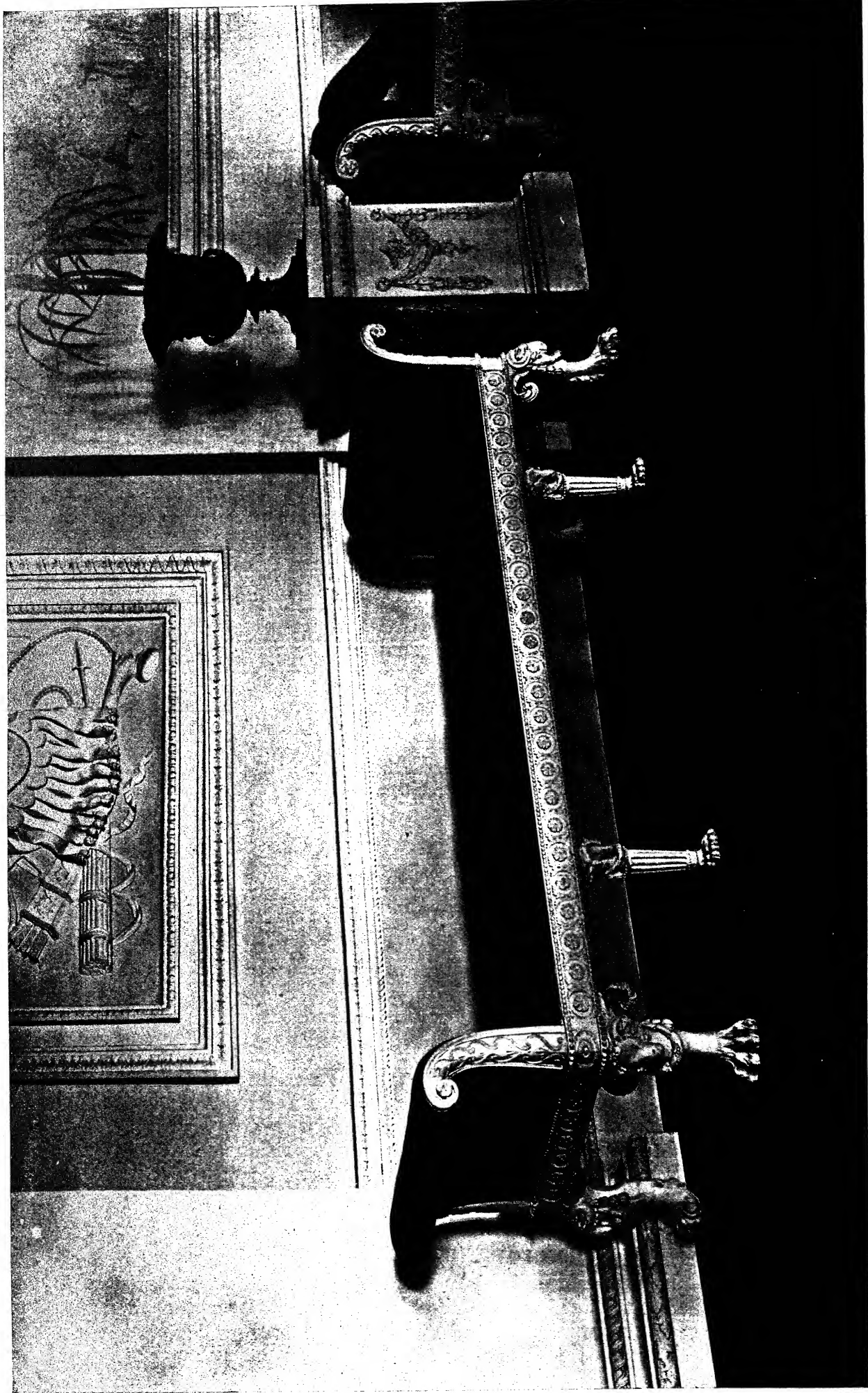


FIG. 112.—WHITE-PAINTED SETTEE. Length, 7 feet. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.



## ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 111, of mahogany, from Harewood, is in the severe style, and about the date 1775; the carving is minute and delicate, and the covering is of leather. Horse-hair, black or coloured, was also much used for these sofas, and was not only confined to comparatively plain specimens, for Hepplewhite in his *Cabinet-maker's and Upholsterer's Guide* (1788) suggests it as a covering for some of his most elaborately designed chairs, and says, 'Mahogany chairs should have seats of horse-hair, plain striped, chequered, etc., at pleasure.' This material, however, on a sofa is extremely uncomfortable, but comfort at this time in furniture was often sacrificed to simplicity. A long settee without a back, resembling the Georgian day-bed, was also a very favourite form of couch. Fig. 112 represents one of a pair of these, carved in soft wood, painted white, and standing in the Hall at Osterley. The corners finish in four massive rams'-headed legs, which terminate in lions' paws, the seat-rail being supported by smaller legs of cylindrical shape, with heads and feet of the same character; the ends scroll over, and are upholstered like the

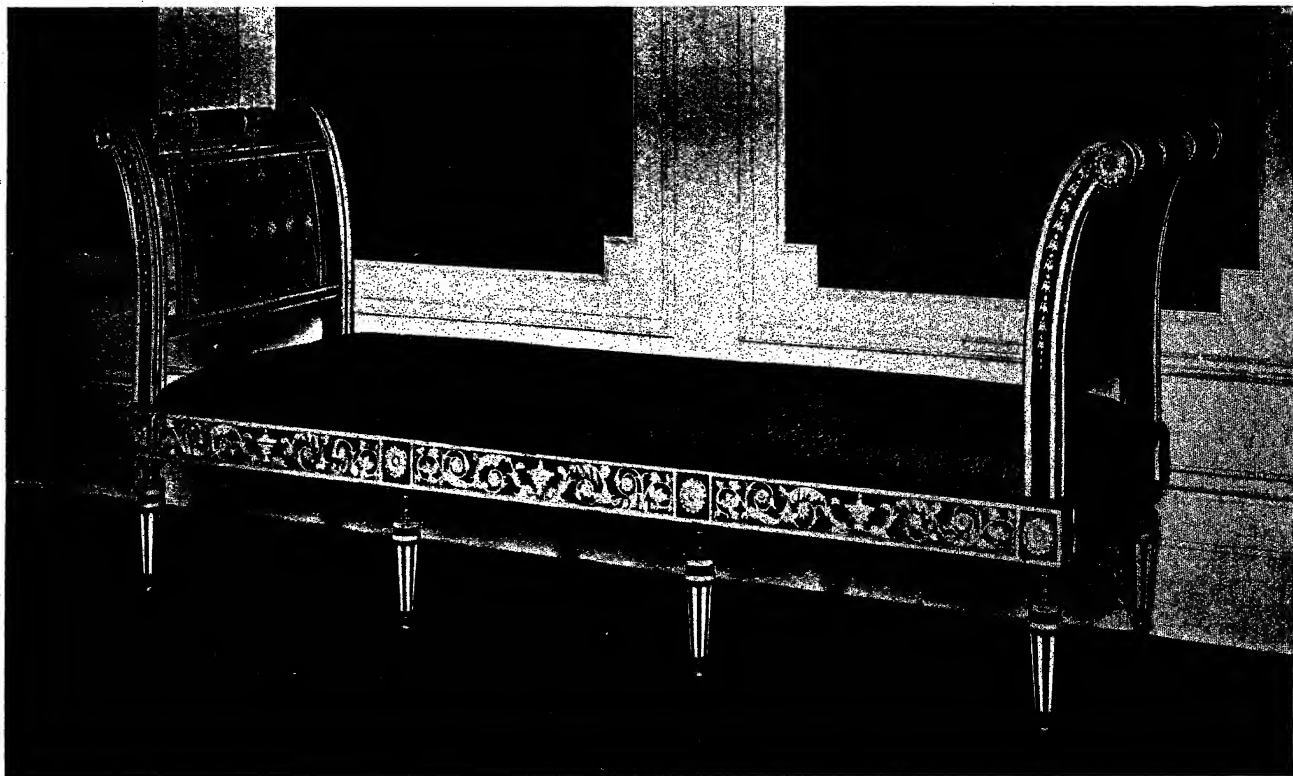


FIG. 113.—PAINTED SETTEE. Length, 6 feet. Property of the HON. MRS. WHITAKER.

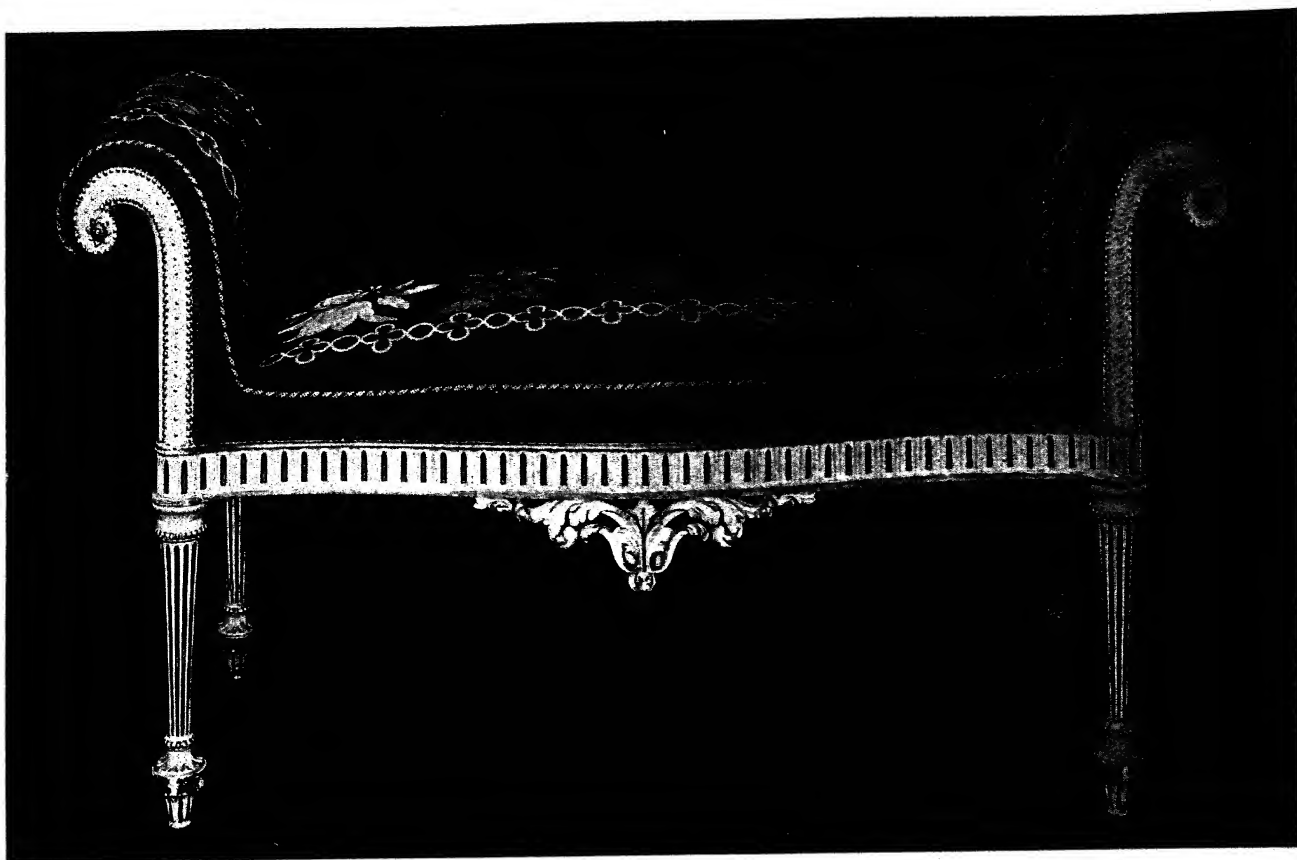


FIG. 114.—PAINTED WINDOW-SEAT. Length, 4 feet. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

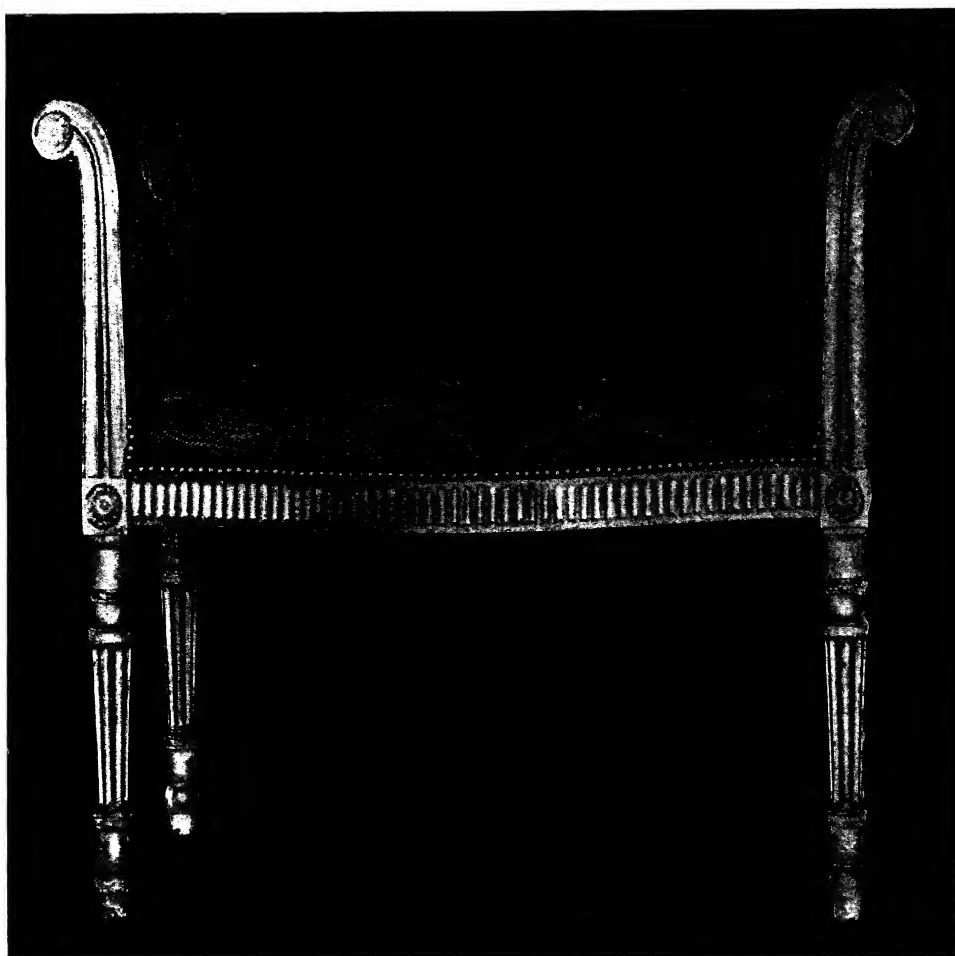


FIG. 115.—WINDOW-SEAT. Length, 2 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

seat. Another of elegant construction and a little later in date is shown in fig. 113; the ends are of open work, and the seat-rail carved with an exceedingly graceful design in classical taste. The effect of the delicate carving is much enhanced by being painted white on a grey-green ground, and very lightly gilt in certain portions. This green ground, with its white detail, in great favour on this class of furniture, was doubtless suggested by the jasper ware of these colours introduced by Wedgwood in 1773, for which Flaxman and other artists furnished the models. The carving of both these examples is exceptionally fine, and leaves nothing to be desired. This same shape was adopted for small window-seats; there are several at Harewood, such as fig. 114, in the windows of the long gallery; another (fig. 115) is from Houghton.

This magnificent room, 80 feet by 24 feet, represents Adam at his best. The elaborate ceiling, the furniture, the frames to the Romneys, Reynolds, Gainsboroughs, and Hoppners, with which the walls are covered, were all designed by him, for Robert Adam was indefatigable in the care and pains he bestowed upon his subject. The windows, five in number, are headed with elaborate gilt cornices and deeply draped valances of wood (fig. 116), carved with great skill to resemble drapery. They are described in a guide-book, *The Tourist's Companion*, written by John Jewell of Harewood in 1817, as 'some rich mock curtains hanging in festoons and apparently ready to let down at pleasure, formed of wood carved and painted under the directions of Mr. Chippendale in so masterly a manner as to deceive every beholder.' The painting is deep blue, and their resemblance to dull silk is extraordinary. From these hang ordinary curtains of the same colour, completing the deception. Between these five windows are four pier-glasses, 9 feet by 7 feet 6 inches (fig. 117), surmounting gilt pier- or console-tables covered with china of great value, the pieces here represented being of celadon ware with Louis Quinze mountings. The glasses are headed by oval paintings in the manner of Angelica Kaufmann, encircled with a garland of roses supported at either

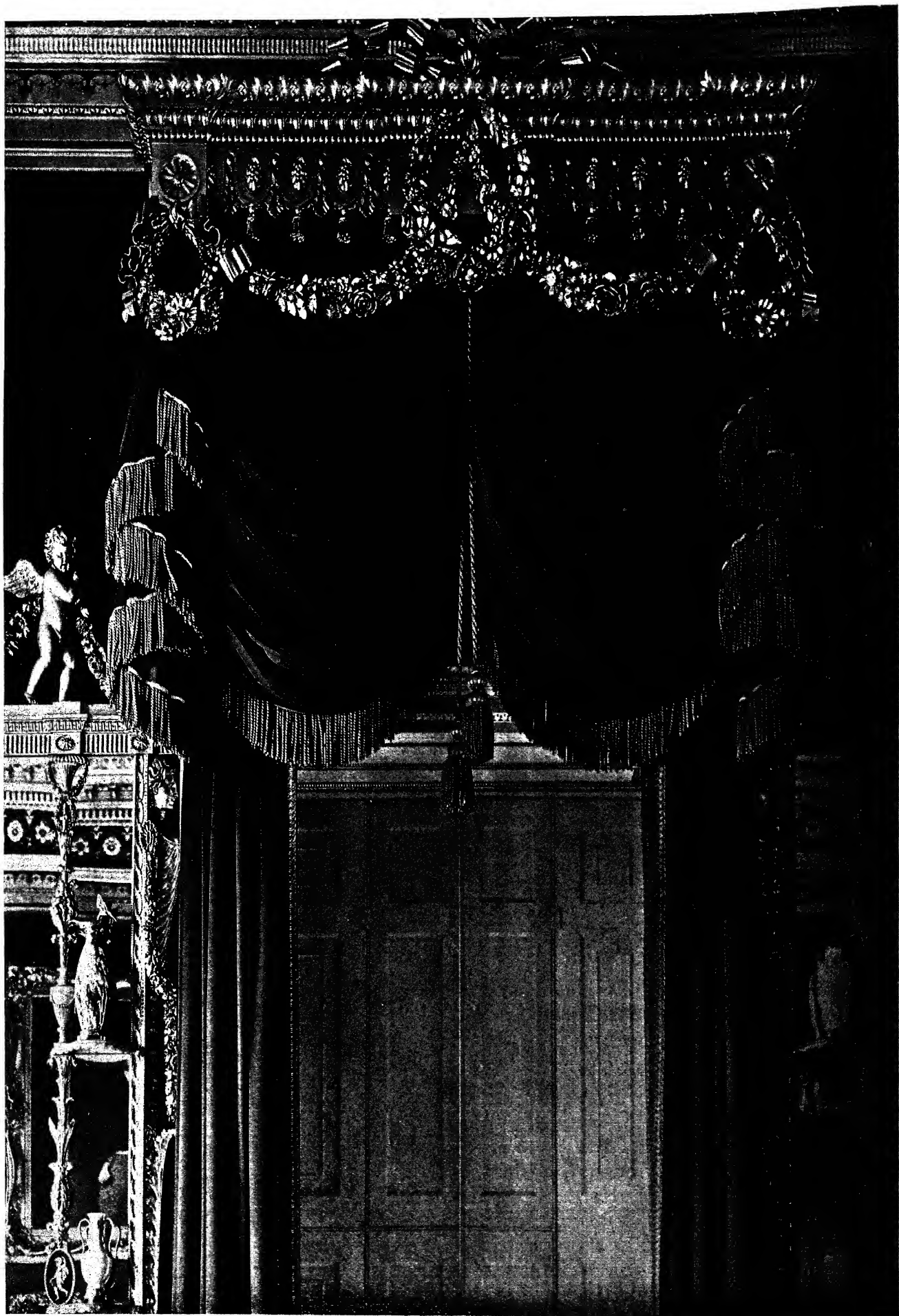


FIG. 116.—WOODEN VALANCE CARVED TO RESEMBLE TAPESTRY.

Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

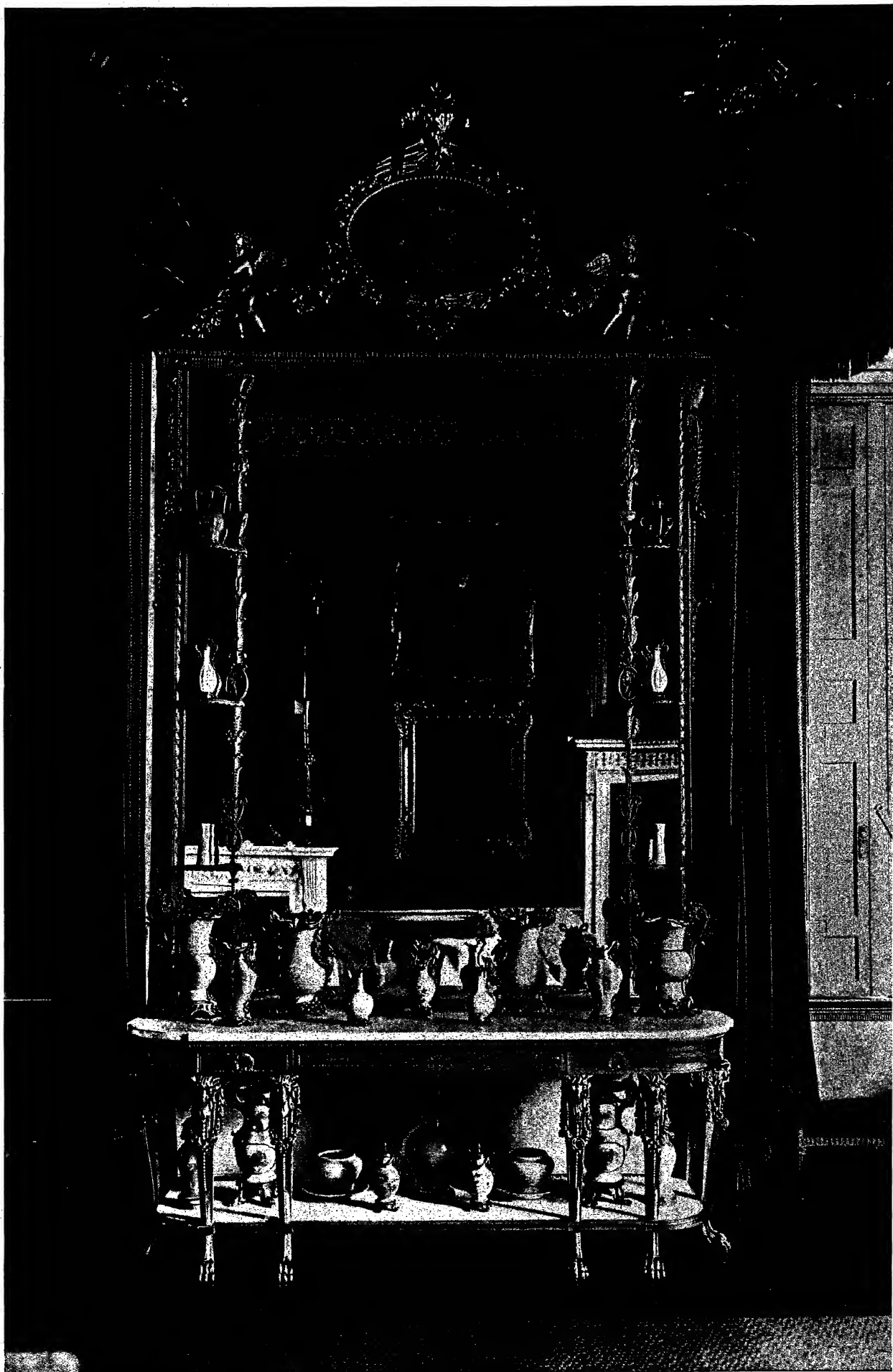


FIG. 117.—GILT PIER-GLASS AND CONSOLE-TABLE. TABLE—Height, 3 feet ; length, 7 feet 6 inches. GLASS—Height, 9 feet ; width, 7 feet 6 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

end by Cupids. In the glass can be seen reflected the frieze of the opposite wall and one of the Adam-Chippendale picture-frames—slabs of white marble form the tops of the tables, which rest upon eight rams'-headed and garlanded capitals, finishing in lions' paws. Altogether a most

exquisite arrangement in decoration. Such pier-glasses cost in those days large sums of money; the comparative value of them and their frames can be seen by referring to extracts from the Harewood accounts (fig. 53). In a rare little work, *The Plate Glass Book*, by a *Glass House Clerk*, 1771, are tables of these prices. The sizes mentioned in this book do not run beyond 60 inches by 42½ inches, and are priced at £81, 17s., plus a duty of 50 per cent., so the charge of £290, equal to £800 of our current money, for a sheet of plate-glass 11 feet high is easily accounted for.

The author naïvely apologises for the prices in the following manner :—

'THE EXCEEDING BRITTLINESS of Glass, as well as the many unavoidable HAZARDS and ACCIDENTS it is always liable to (*in the working, Silvering, Framing, Packing, &c.*), is so very considerable an affair, that it is (BUT REASONABLE)

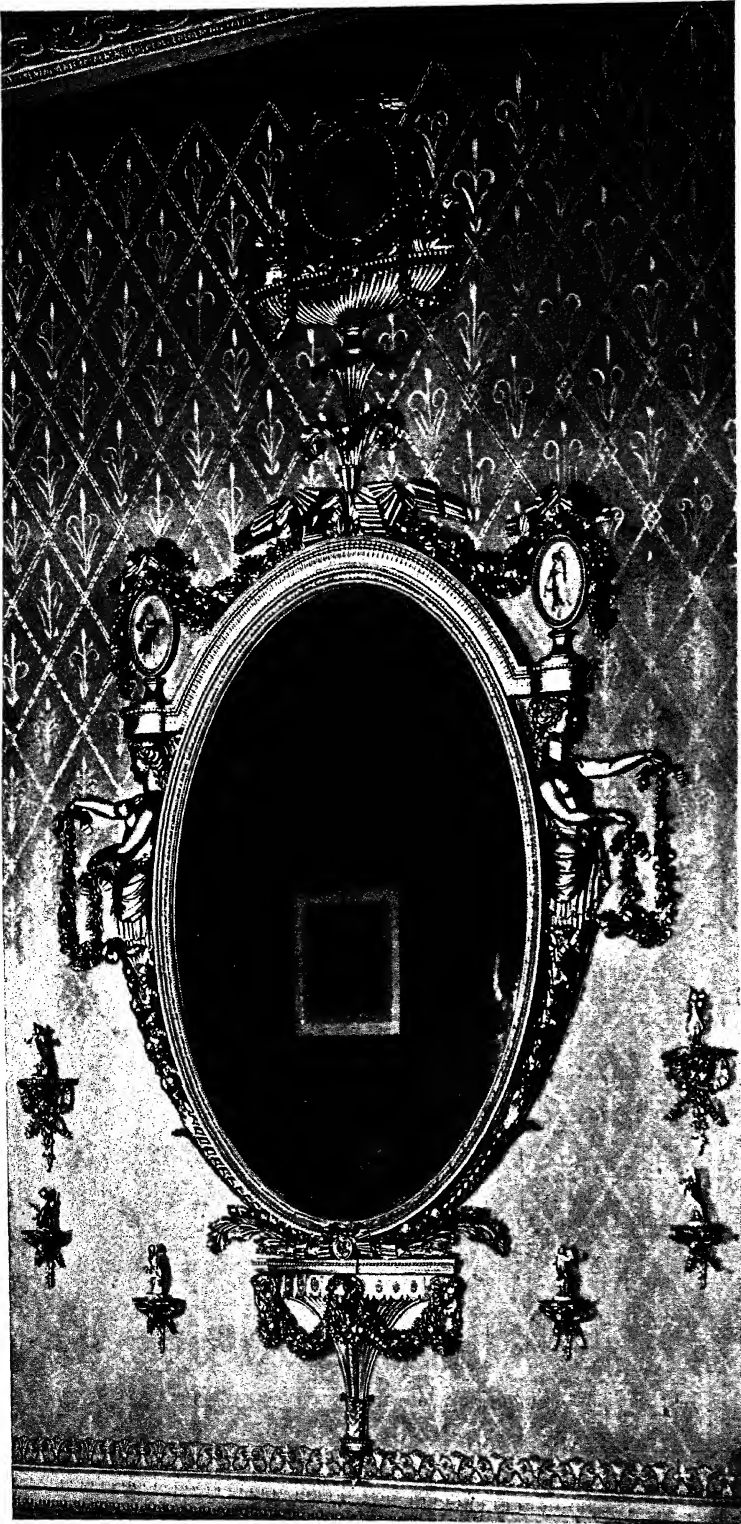


FIG. 118.—GILT MIRROR.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

to allow the workmen on those Accounts a Profit from (251 to 301 *per cent.*), that is, 5s. or 6s. in the Pounds. But in things that are (*very curious*) this allowance is by no means sufficient.'

The directions for using the tables are involved :—

'When you cannot find the sum in the TABLE that you want the Discount upon, you must find the next LESS sum, and take the Discounts upon THAT instead of IT.'

The author further states that :—

'The *Chemists* hold that there is no BODY but may be *vitrified*, that is, converted into *Glass*. By intense Heat, even Gold itself gives way to the Suns Rays collected in a burning glass and becomes Glass. And it was a merry Saying of a very great Artist in the Business of *Glass* that their Profession would be the last in the World ; for that when God should consume the Universe with Fire, all things there in would be turned to *Glass*.'

Looking-glasses of every description formed an important item in Adam decoration, differing entirely from those of the previous twenty years, in the size of the glass surface and the symmetrical distribution of the ornament. Fig. 118 shows an oval mirror of large size, in which the frame is contained between two female figures holding garlands in their hands, and headed by small medallions painted by Angelica Kaufmann. As a cresting to this graceful motive, a tazza-shaped vase of considerable height, surmounted by another and larger medallion, also by the same artist, finishes the design. The base is in the form of a flat bracket, decorated with rams' heads, from which fall festoons of flowers—brackets of this char-

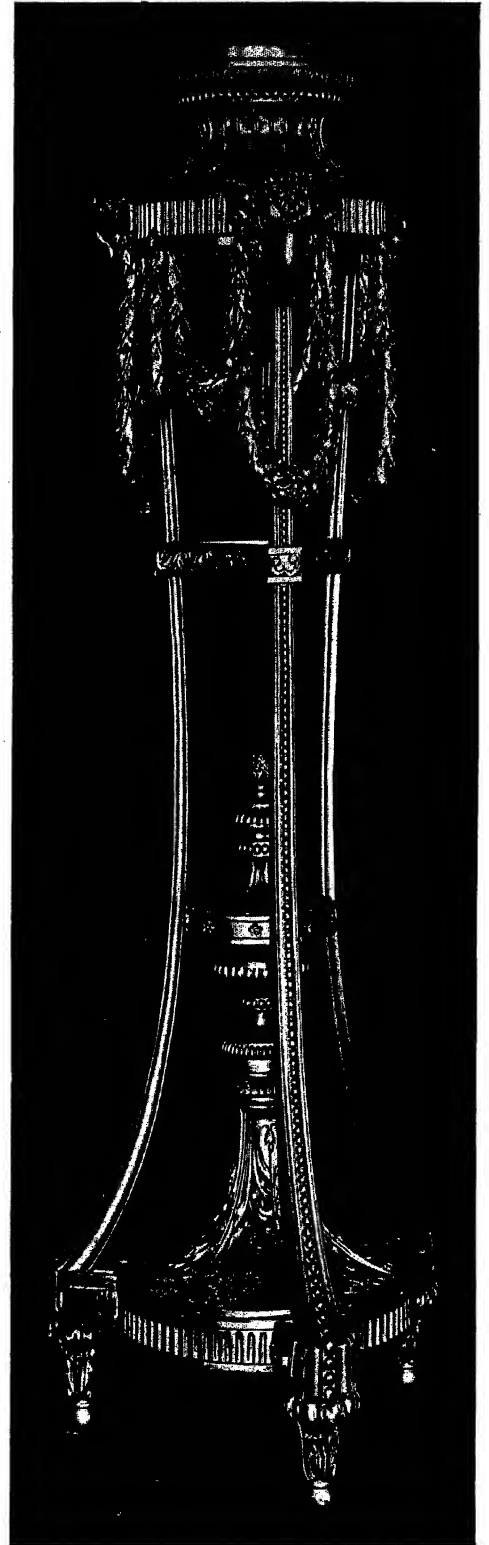


FIG. 119.—GILT TORCHÈRE.  
Height, 4 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

acter were frequently made at this time as candle-brackets, and for china, glass, or silver candelabra. The candle-stands or torchères, so numerous during the previous thirty years, declined in number, and in the hands of Adam took the shape of tripods; sometimes these were of elaborate design and beautiful workmanship, gilt and inlaid with Wedgwood plaques or paintings.

Fig. 119, one from a set of four of about 1770, is of beautiful construction; the rams' heads, with their laurel festoons, are of great finish, and the base rising in the form of a lamp is a masterpiece of design. The supports to these tripods are invariably simple, and imitate classical bronzes of this kind.

Fig. 120 is of rather later character, the general motive of the design being sacrificed to finish and detail. The spaces between the tripod legs are filled with long tabs decorated in white and gold, enclosing paintings of classical figures in the manner of Cipriani; the lower portion being occupied by minutely carved and gilt open-work panels; the tripod finishes in lions' paws, which again rest upon another base composed of three sphinxes; it could be used either as a stand for a candelabrum, for the pastile or incense burner that surmounts it, or for flowers. Its design and decoration is interesting, for although made for Osterley before 1780, it foreshadows the style known as Empire, proving that the source of this fashion was by no means French, but that a simultaneous adoption of the New Italian style

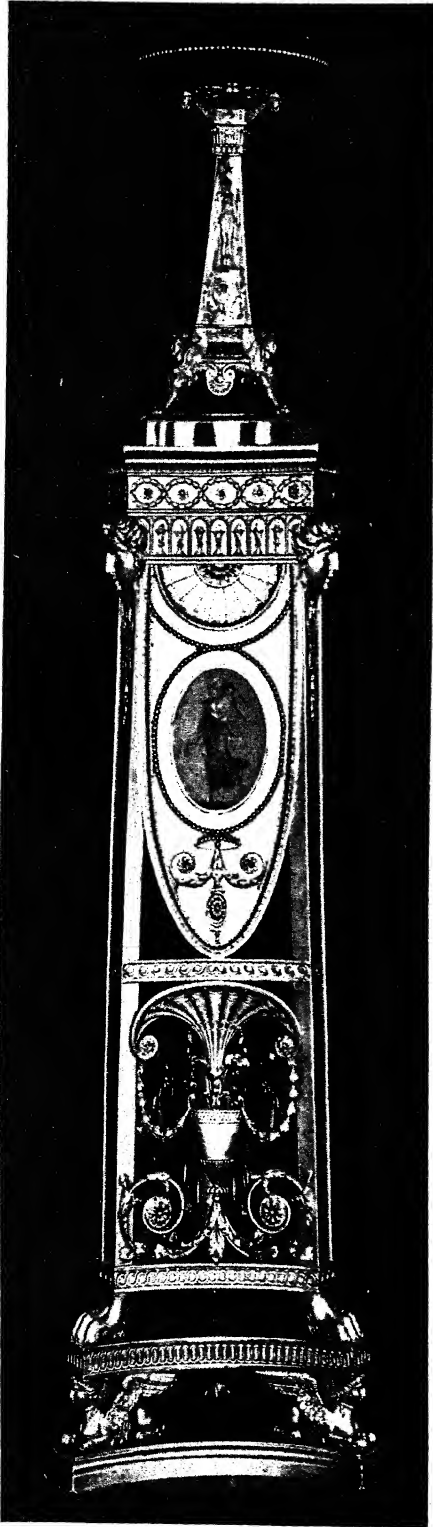


FIG. 120.—GILT AND PAINTED TORCHÈRE. Height, 5 feet 8 inches. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

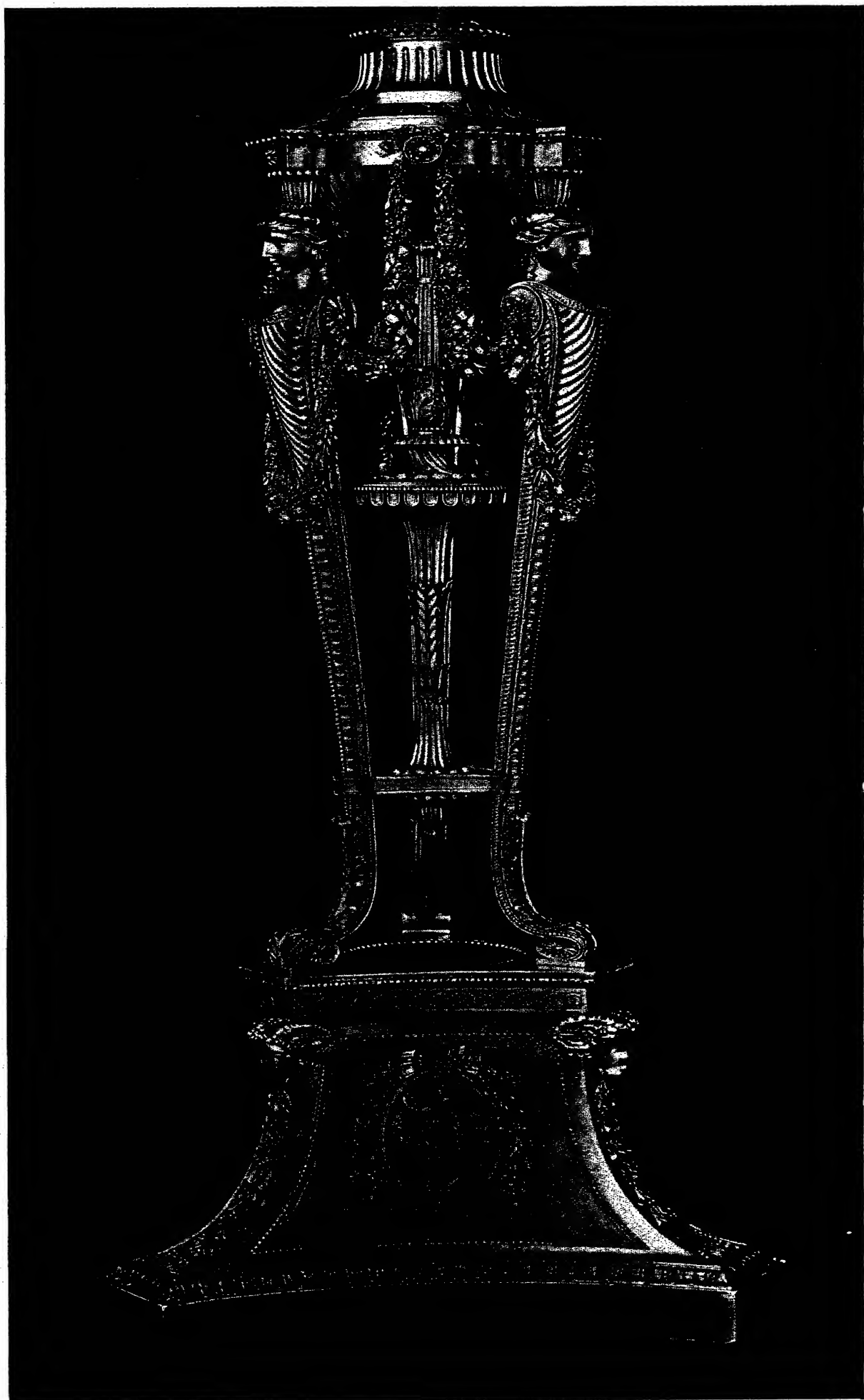


FIG. 121.—GILT TORCHÈRE. Height, 5 feet 2 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

took place in France and England—one called after Adam, the other after Louis XVI—Empire being but the evolution of these tastes with many of the original motives retained. Fig. 121 is another specimen designed by Adam at Harewood.



FIG. 122.—MAHOGANY TORCHÈRE.  
Height, 4 feet 10 inches.  
Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.

Fig. 122 is one of a pair, a plain tripod of mahogany, admirably proportioned and still retaining its metal candelabrum. The arrangement of the candle-branches carries out the simplicity of the stand, for symmetrical composition in all objects had replaced the irregular and picturesque lines of the Chippendale period. The bases of pole-screens were usually of tripod form, and in some instances solid. Plate VIII. *a* represents one of these in mahogany, inlaid with shells and sprigs of oak with acorns. The screen is of white satin, delicately embroidered in flowers, in the long stitch of about 1785. Ornamental pedestals to hold vases or busts, placed upon the staircases or in the halls of Adam houses, were generally of soft wood carved and painted to resemble marble. Fig. 123 is an early example of about 1768, columnar in character; the necking is carved with the ox skull and drapery motive already described, and the flutings of the shaft centre in a large and carefully carved oval patera; the dark portion is painted to resemble porphyry, the rest as white marble. On it stands a finely carved urn in black basalt of classical shape. The pedestal (fig. 124) is a few years later in date, and is one of a pair standing on the staircase at Harewood. The flat surface and framings are painted as black and coloured marbles, and the

PLATE VIII (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

(a) INLAID MAHOGANY POLE SCREEN

HEIGHT, 4 FEET 11 INCHES

PROPERTY OF

ALFRED LITTLETON, Esq.

(b) AMBOYNA-WOOD WRITING-CABINET

HEIGHT, 4 FEET 9 INCHES

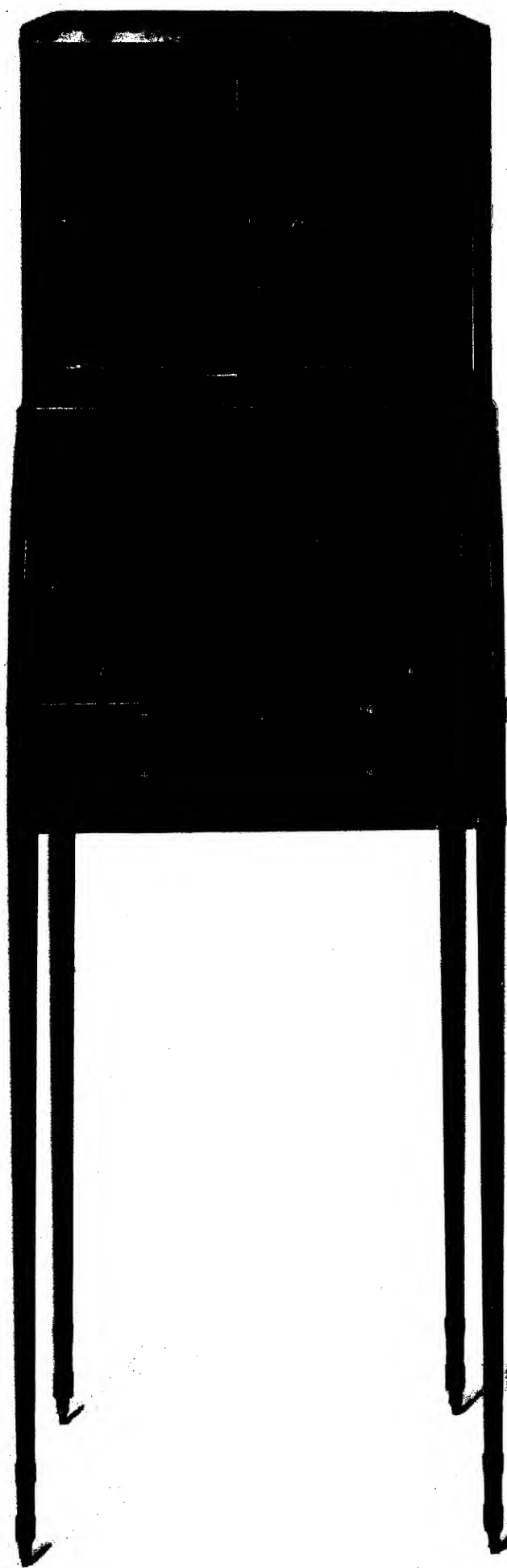
DEPTH, 1 FOOT 5½ "

BREADTH, 2 FEET 5 "

PROPERTY OF

ALAN MACKINNON, Esq.









# ENGLISH FURNITURE

ornament to resemble bronze. On one of these staircases is suspended the large wooden lantern (fig. 125), carved in a most beautiful design of cherubs as terminal supports to the cupola, their outstretched wings rising and meeting in accordance with this shape. The carving is attributed to the personal work of Thomas Chippendale, who must have been over sixty in 1770 when the lantern was made, as he died in 1779.

Arrangements for lighting houses and rooms had considerably improved by the year 1770. Glass chandeliers with innumerable pendants and drops were generally to be found in every well-furnished drawing-room. In addition to these, glass candelabra of graceful line, with ormolu bases, sometimes inlaid with a Wedgwood plaque, as in fig. 126, were used in great numbers. Hanging lamps and lamps upon column-stands were in the libraries and on side-tables in the dining-rooms, the dining-table being lit by silver candelabra and candlesticks, for these had largely increased in number both with the rich and middle classes, and were placed about the rooms for reading or needlework, but the lighting of rooms in an ordinary household must still have been very inefficient.

Samuel Johnson was in the habit of taking the candle from the stick and holding

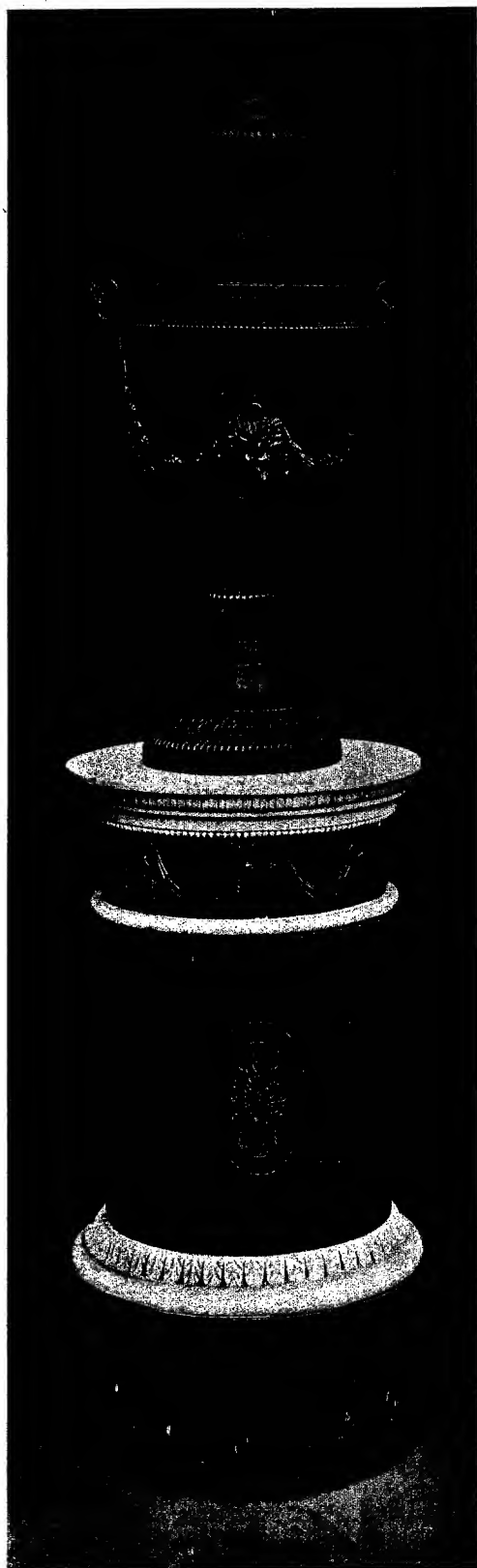


FIG. 123.—BASALT URN AND PAINTED WOOD PEDESTAL.

Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

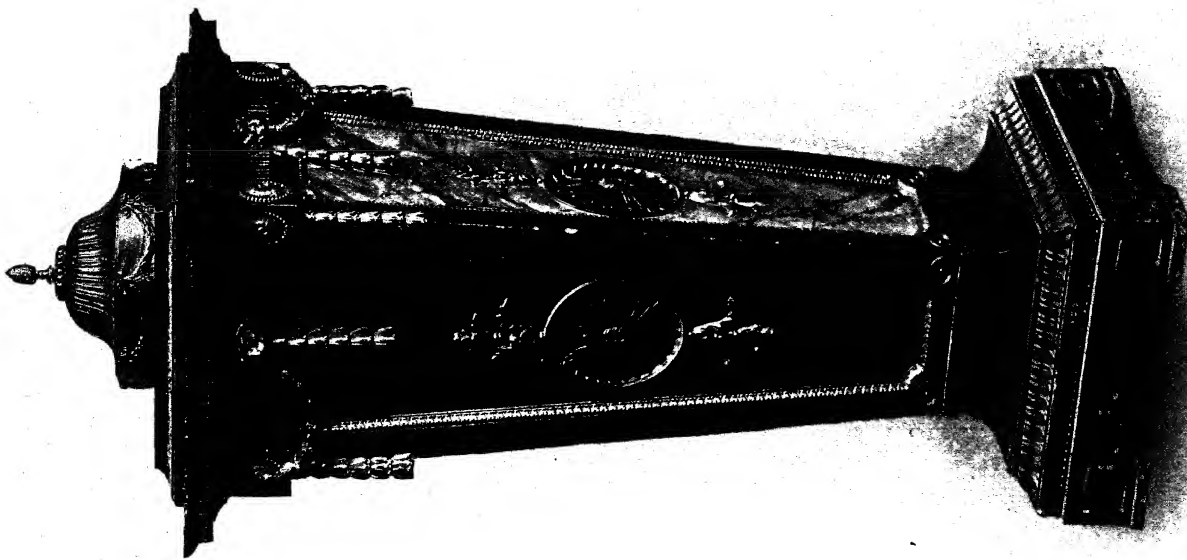


FIG. 124.—PAINTED WOOD PEDESTAL.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

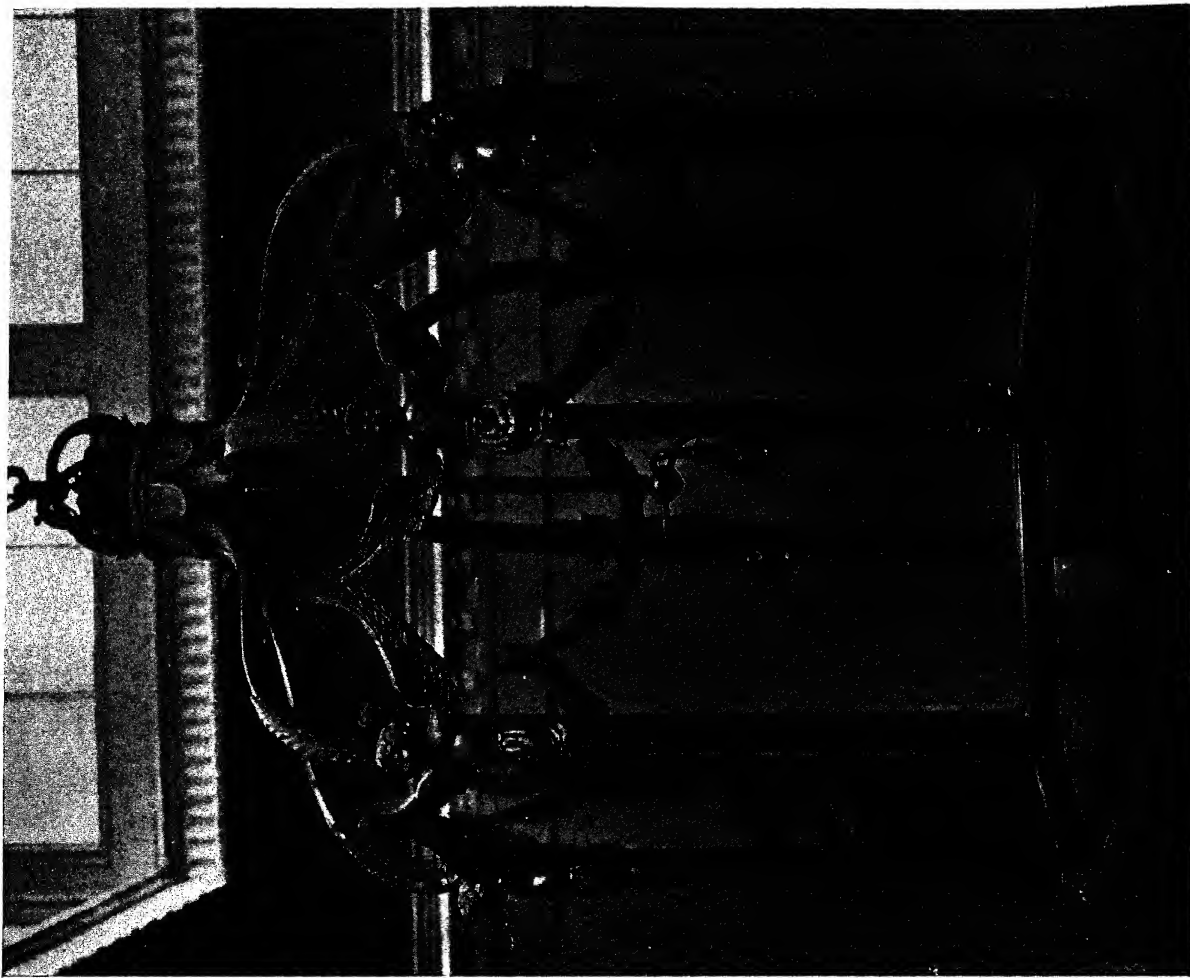


FIG. 125.—CARVED WOOD LANTERN. Height, 3 feet  
4 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

it in his hands as he read. Boswell refers to his habits with candles as follows :—

‘The truth is, that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as turning the candles with their heads downwards when they did not burn bright enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not be but disagreeable to a lady.’

Stands were also made as tripods to support the large china vases and cisterns that decorated the halls and drawing-rooms. Fig. 127 is a representative specimen from Nostell of this type, corresponding in motive to most of the furniture designed by Adam about 1770; the laurel swag, however, is disproportionate to the piece of china, and is by no means helped out by the excessive size of the lions’ paw-feet necessary to carry its weight. Another piece of furniture of similar construction is the drawing-room side-table, one of a pair (fig. 128); here the hoof feet are in the right proportion to the goats’ heads. The somewhat hazardous construction is not endangered by the weight of the top, as in this instance it is of wood beautifully veneered and inlaid in brilliant colours. The gilding of all this furniture is remarkable for its brilliance and depth of colour.

In considering this series of examples made from designs by Robert Adam, it must be remembered that the drastic change introduced by this artist is an isolated innovation in the history of our furniture, for the individuality of one man was thrust upon his contemporaries with but little or no reference to any preceding style, apart from

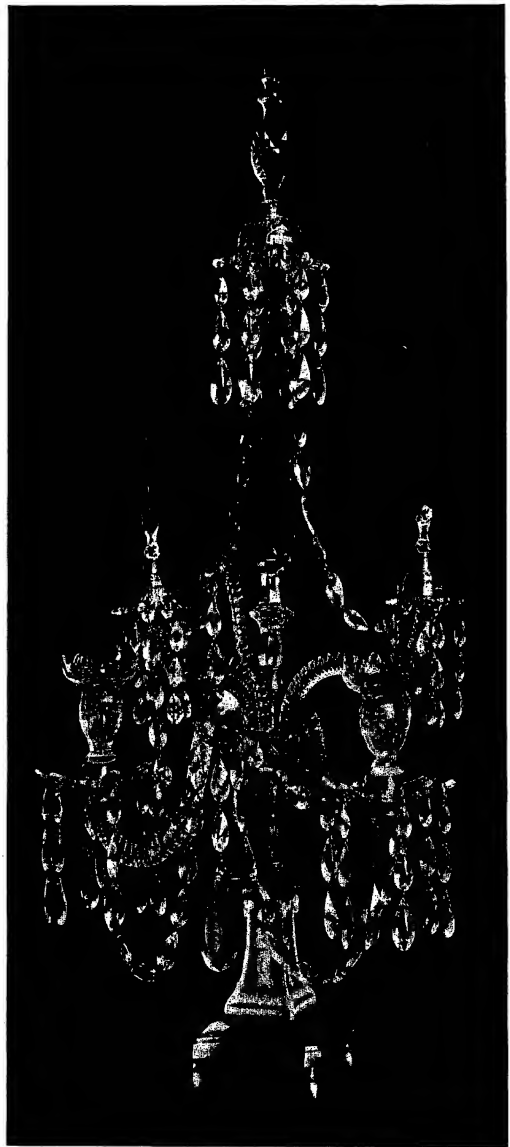


FIG. 126.—GLASS CANDELABRUM WITH WEDGWOOD BASE. Height, 2 feet 6 inches. Property of PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

that of classical times; his furniture was a necessary accompaniment to his architecture and decoration. The energy of his nature and enthusiasm for his subject created a fresh series of decorative objects, original in motive, and entirely suitable to their surroundings. It was fortunate that these ideas were materialised in the best possible manner at the hands of Chippendale, who, although nearly sixty years old by the date 1765, was quickly appreciative of the new change in taste, and introduced, in collaboration with Adam, the beautiful satin-wood inlaid furniture invariably attributed to the hand of Sheraton, but which documentary evidence

given in this volume very distinctly proves was due to the combined efforts of these two remarkable men. It is doubtful whether Chippendale's most elaborate carving ever entailed the same expenditure of time and care as the selection of rare woods, brass mountings, and perfect workmanship found in the examples at Osterley and Harewood, and though it may be urged that such pieces are not really representative of their period, in tracing the development of any style, it is necessary to emphasise the most ambitious of its examples, as more is to be learnt in observing these than by dwelling upon ordinary and commercial repetitions of the same ideas.

Beds after 1765 conformed to the new taste in their decoration, though they still resembled in structure those of the previous thirty years. The



FIG. 127.—GILT TRIPOD STAND.  
Height, 1 foot 10 inches; diameter, 1 foot 6 inches.  
Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

mahogany posts were simple in their flutings, the carving being confined to the bases and capitals, and consisted of an upright and palmated leaf pattern, or wheat-ears in low relief, the feet generally remaining plain and covered by the lower valance, the upper valance being festooned in folds of drapery. These in rich households were of damask, and in exceptional instances embroidered, but occasionally plain silk was used for both curtains and valances. Mrs. Delaney, who was still regarded as the authority on bed furniture, when staying with Lord Butc in 1774, writes as follows:—

‘The only objection to y<sup>e</sup> house is 42 stone steps, which you must ascend whenever you go up to y<sup>e</sup> lodging apartments ; one of these apartments is Lord and Lady Butes, and 4 for strangers. Up another flight of stairs leads to the attick, where there are as many apartments as compleat but not as lofty. The furniture well suited to all, the beds damask and rich sattin, green, blue, and crimson ; mine was white sattin. The rooms hung with plain paper suited to y<sup>e</sup> colour of y<sup>e</sup> beds, except mine, which was pea

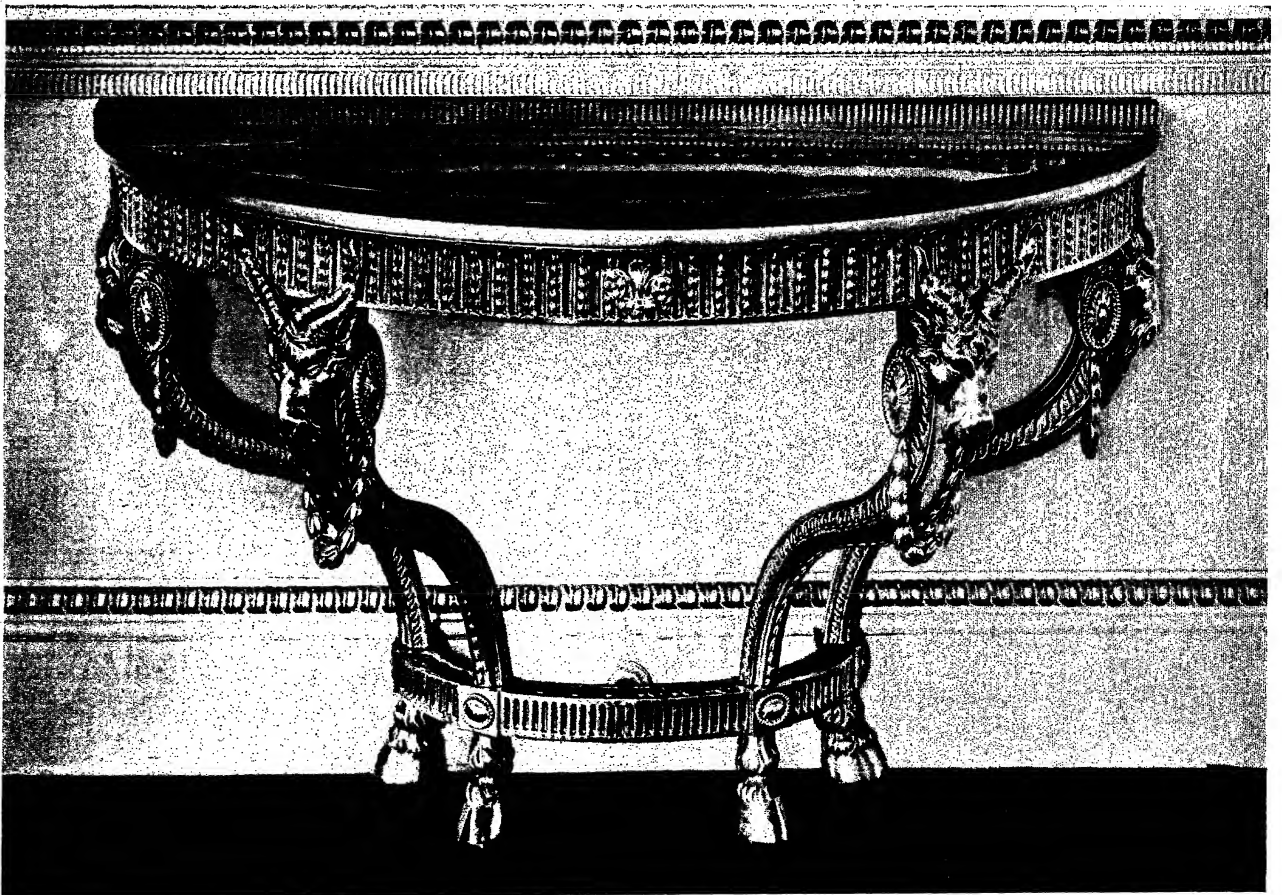


FIG. 128.—GILT CONSOLE-TABLE. Length, 5 feet 2 inches ; height, 2 feet 9 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

green, and so is the whole apartment below stairs. The curtains, chairs, and sophas are all plain sattin. Every room filled with pictures, many capital ones ; and a handsome screen hangs by each fire side with y<sup>e</sup> plan of y<sup>e</sup> room, and with the names of the hands by whom the pictures were painted. The Chimney pieces in good taste ; no extravagance of fancy ; indeed throughout the house that is avoided. Fine frames to the pictures, but very little gilding besides, and the cielings elegant and not loaded with ornament, a great variety of fine vases, foreign and English, and marble tables.

A bed of early Adam taste from Harewood, and probably contemporary with the completion of the house in 1772, is fig. 129. The ornament on the cornice still preserves the earlier feeling of gilt and foliated scrolls, but in this instance centring in a honeysuckle finial, and backed at the front of the tester by a shallow lunette covered in the same damask as the hangings. The corners finish in the traditional vase-shaped finials, here of classical form, and the mahogany cornice is carved in the dentals or tabs, which invariably formed the ornament to this portion of the bed. The red damask valance is draped, fringed, tasselled, and lined with cream-coloured silk, and these tassels, with the folds of the silk, head the posts where the cantonnières of an earlier period formed a prominent feature. The damask of the back is panelled with flutings of the cream silk. The above forms a very good and simple example for those wishing to upholster a bed in the Adam or Hepplewhite taste.

State-beds, such as the magnificent specimen (fig. 130) designed by Robert Adam for Osterley, were still made for great establishments, but by the year 1770 it was no longer a general custom to furnish a newly built house in the country with a state-bed. These very important and expensive items of furniture were therefore after this date made only in exceptional instances and for the use of royalty.

The structure of this bed, probably made by Chippendale for Robert Child, Lord Jersey's ancestor, is most elaborate. Four columns of satin-wood, inlaid with upright green laurelling and finishing in bases and capitals of chased metal, support a canopy that rises in a lofty dome ; the



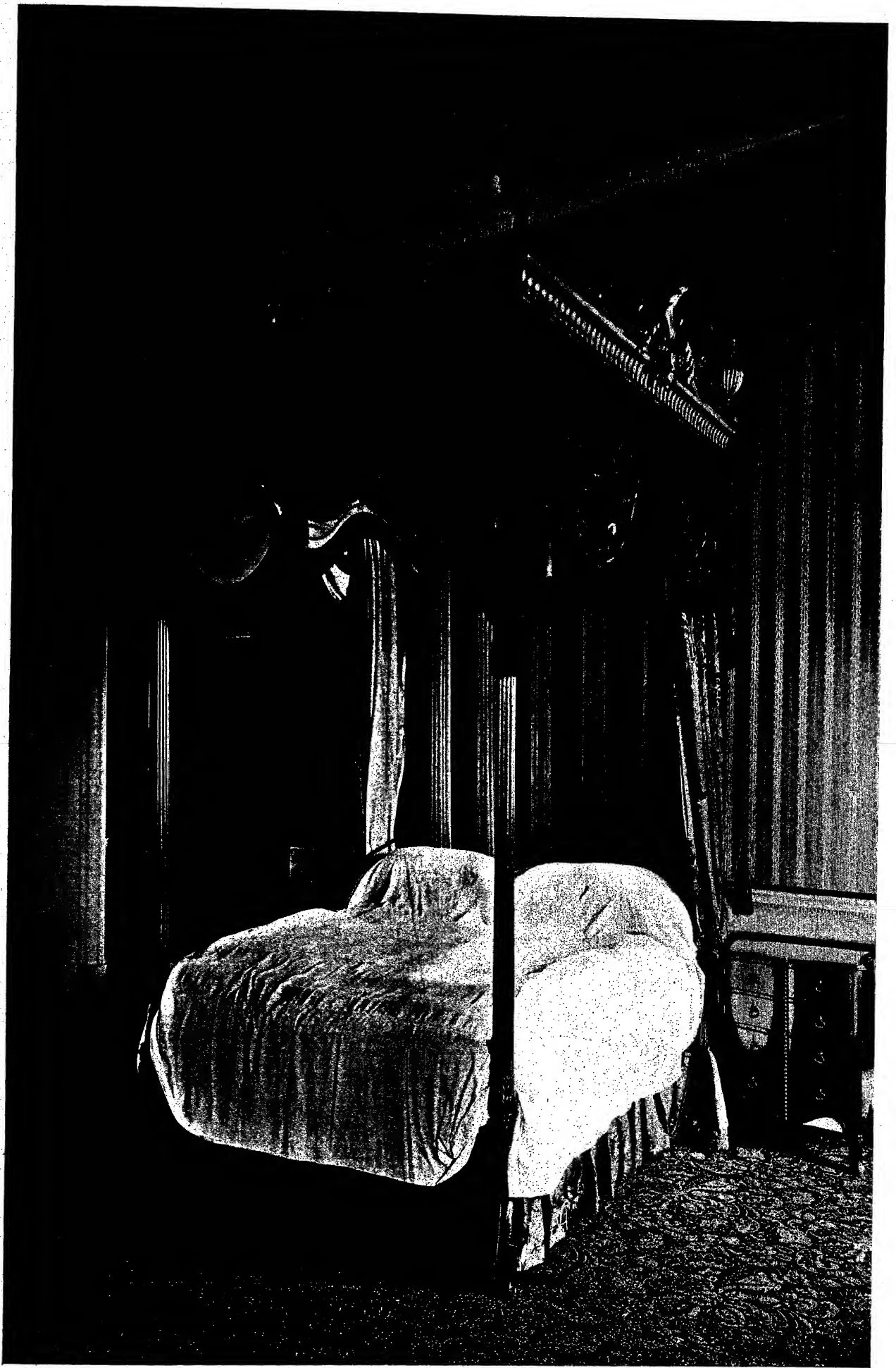


FIG. 129.—MAHOGANY AND GILT BED. Height, 10 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



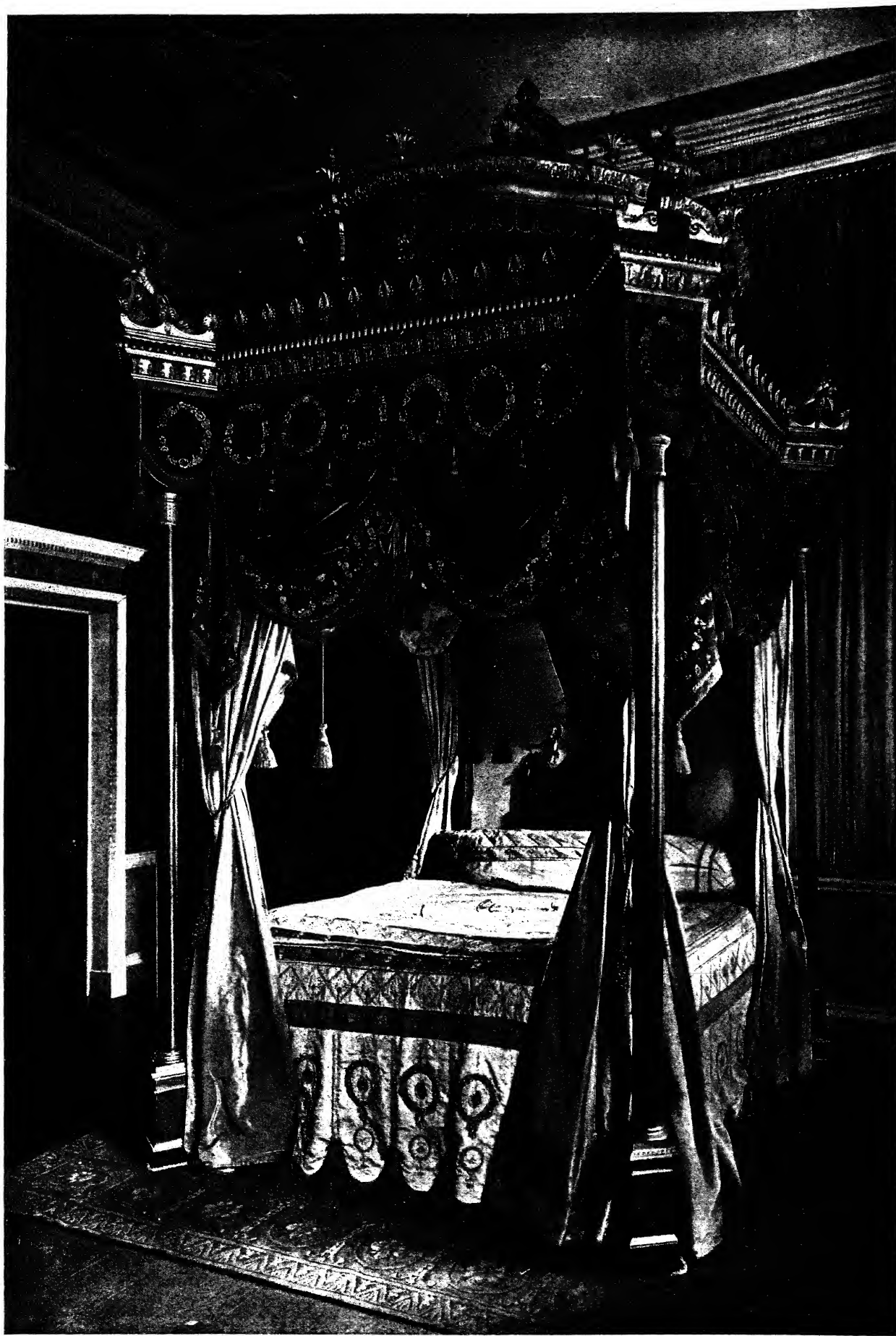


FIG. 130.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD AND GILT BED. Height to top of Dome, 16 feet ; length, 8 feet ; width, 7 feet. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

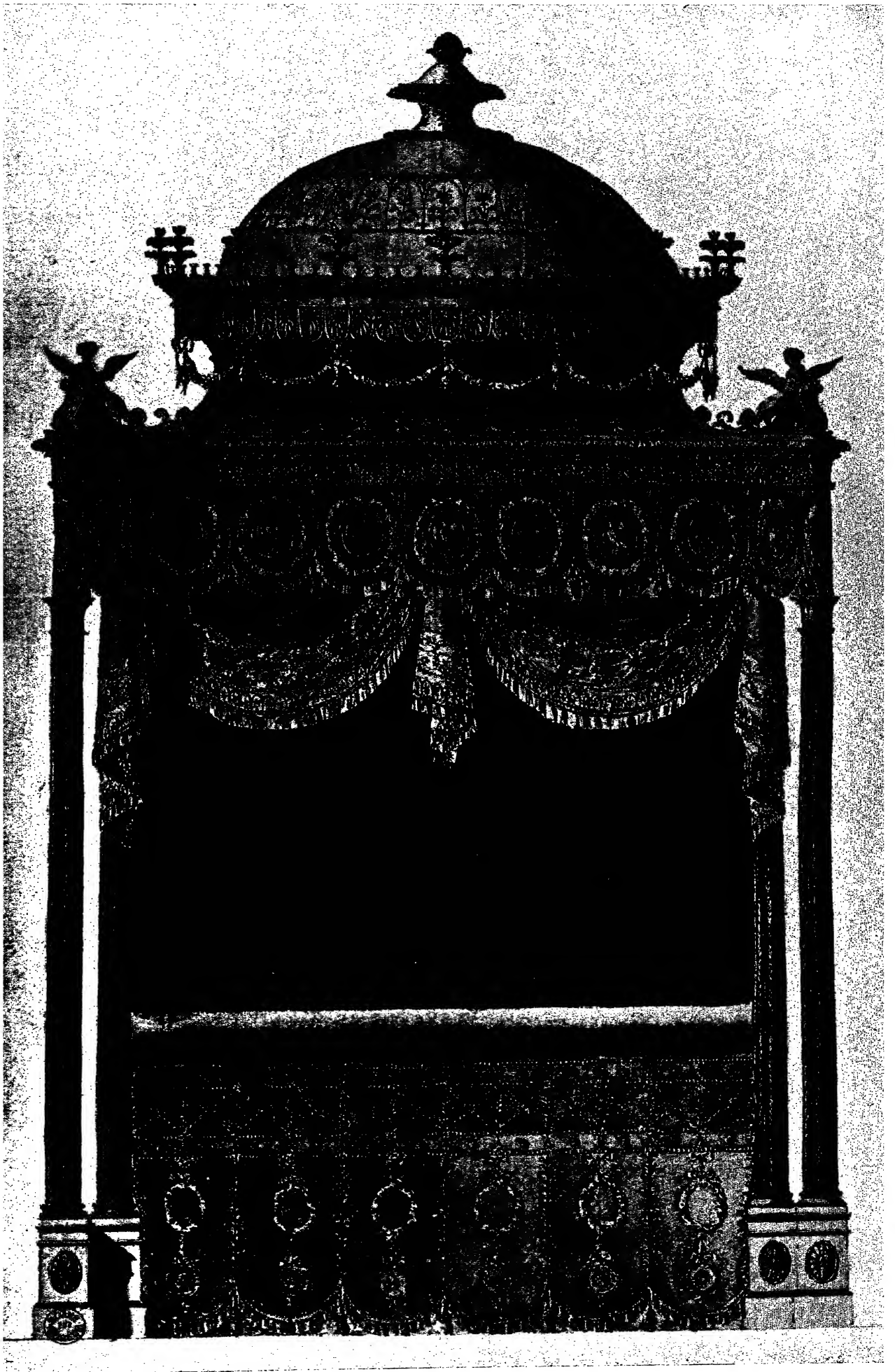


FIG. 131.—ROBERT ADAM'S DESIGN FOR BED (FIG. 130).

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

cupola is covered in pale green silk, embroidered with a band of honeysuckle design, and at its spring is surrounded by a ring of carved and gilt plume finials surmounting a frieze of honeysuckled tabs, from which hang festoons of flowers most delicately carved and gilt. The cornice, projecting at the four corners into square cantonnières, is treated as that of a classical temple, and crested with the antefixes found on the roofs of such buildings; four winged sphinxes at the corners complete the structure, the whole of the woodwork being most admirably carved and gilt. The valance is of pale green velvet embroidered in coloured silks and edged with a fringe of tassels, and below this is a second draped valance of embroidered velvet; the curtains are of plain pale green silk, and the cream quilt is embroidered with colours in an Adam pattern. The bed stands upon a most interesting carpet, evidently designed by the same hand to match the bed with its elaborate upholstery. Fig. 131 is a reproduction of the original drawing by Adam existing in the Soane Museum, showing the great care and interest taken by him in its production. In carrying out this design the double columns were omitted, and the carved group of figures and their plinth, forming the bedhead, evidently underwent alteration, but otherwise all details in the drawing were adhered to. In these days great architects do not design upholstery, but the innumerable designs for curtains, valances, and their headings, made by Adam and existing at the Soane Museum, show that keen attention was paid to this important detail in the last half of the eighteenth century, and that the architect of those times thought nothing beneath his notice that added to the finish of his rooms. A royal bed, a few years earlier in date than the preceding example, is shown in fig. 132, probably designed by Adam for Queen Caroline, wife of George III.

The cornice in his most severe style is hipped at the corners with the akroter, which served in Greek buildings as an ornamental finish to the corners of the roof; for although the Middle Ages and the Renaissance make no use of the antefixe and akroter, it was adopted as decoration in

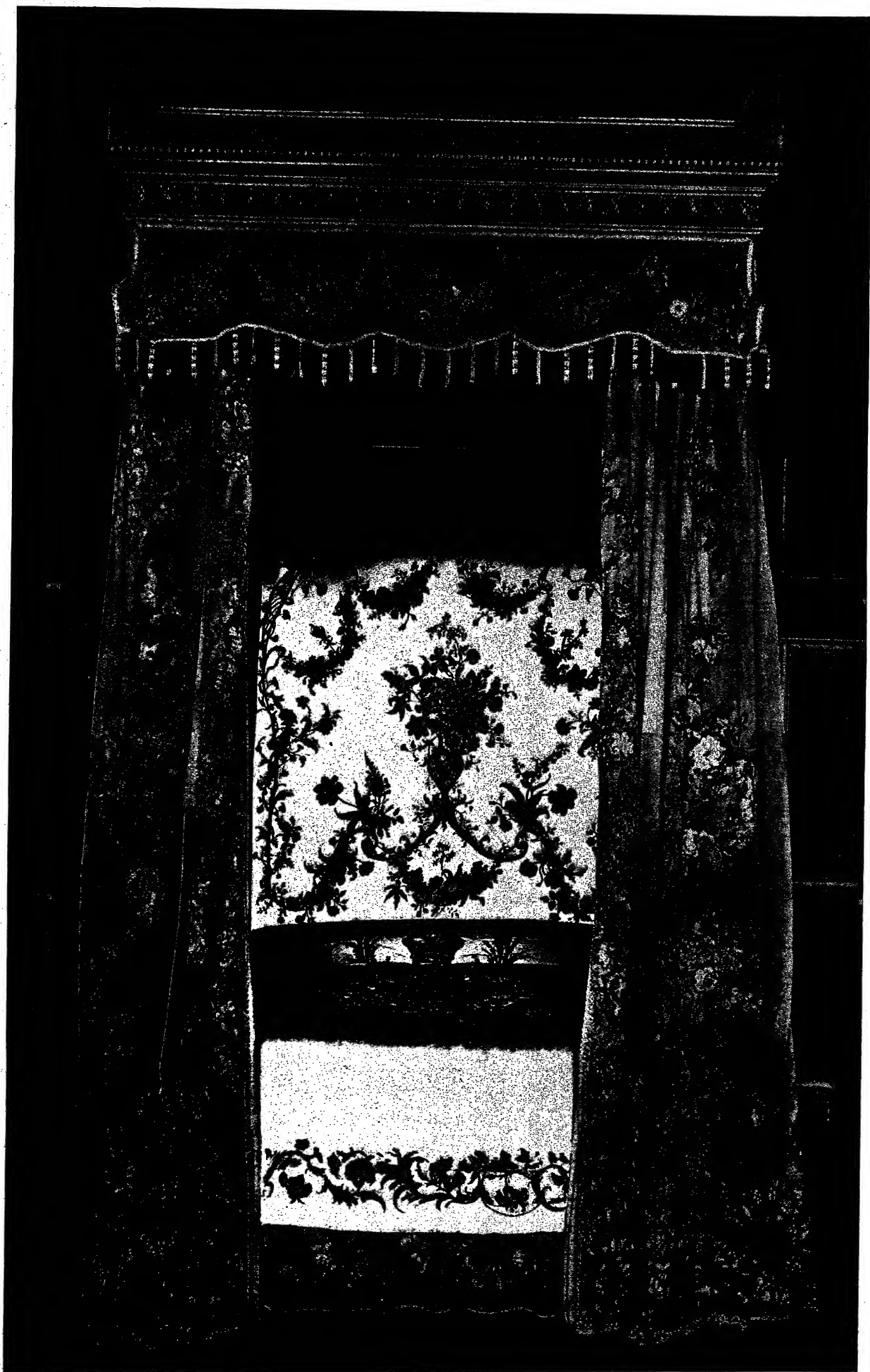


FIG. 132.—EMBROIDERED BED AT HAMPTON COURT.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

modern times. The valances are cornered in the old-fashioned cantonnières, and, with the curtains, are of pale lilac silk, embroidered in flowers, brilliant in colour and of tasteful execution ; the back is of cream-coloured silk, worked in a graceful composition of flower wreaths centring in a vase filled with roses, anemones, and lilac. The embroidery is of high finish, and a pictorial realism is attempted both in colour and form that was unknown in needlework until this date, resembling in effect the contemporary silk tapestries manufactured in France and signed Neilson.

Fig. 133 is a very interesting bed, for it is signed W. Coombes, and



FIG. 133.—SATIN-WOOD PAINTED BED.  
Property of MRS. ASSHETON SMITH.

PLATE IX (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

MAHOGANY AND SATINWOOD CLOTHES PRESS

HEIGHT, 6 FEET 6 INCHES

BREADTH, 4 " 1½ "

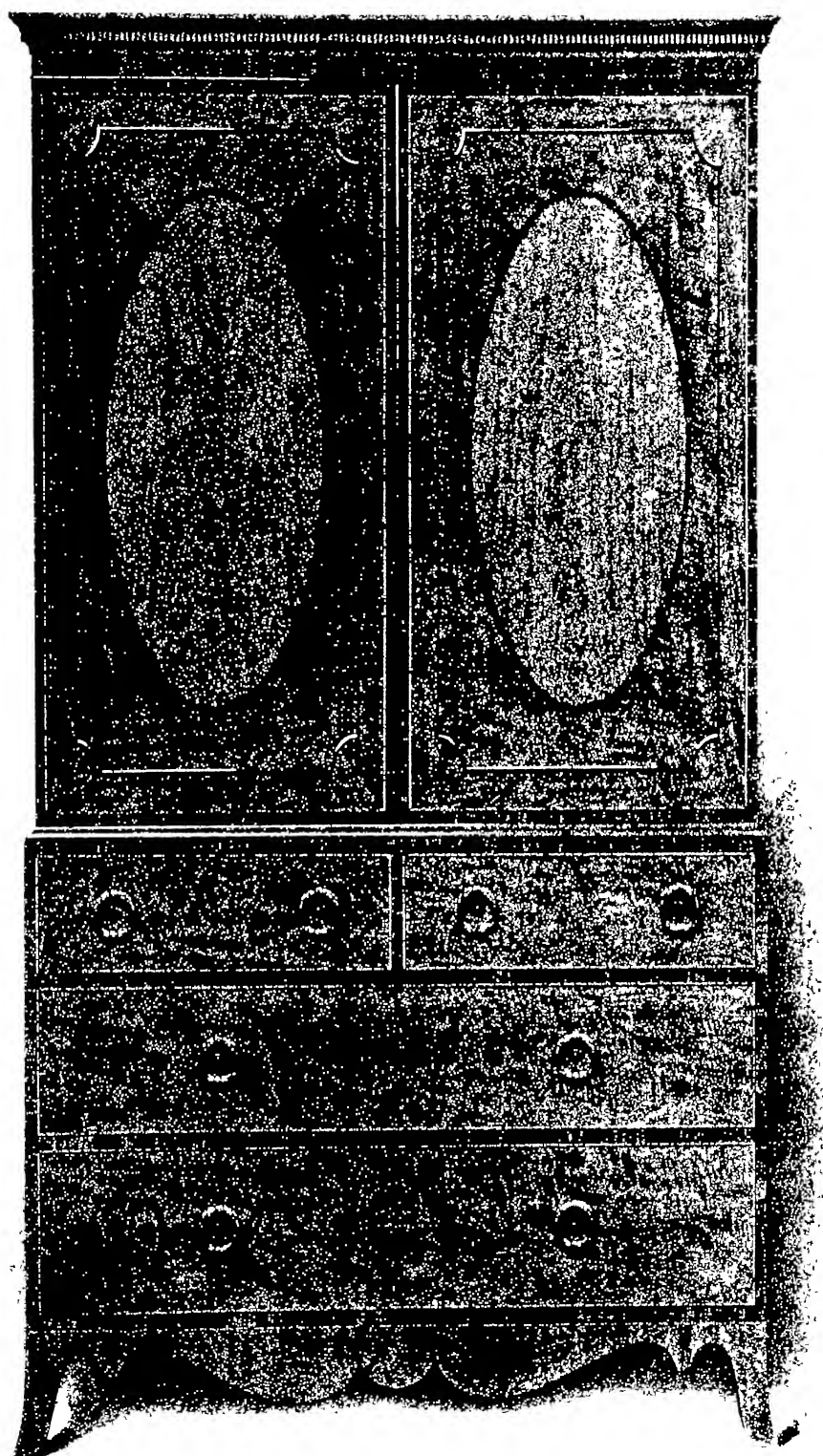
DEPTH, 2 "

PROPERTY OF

PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.









# ENGLISH FURNITURE

dated 1789, being another instance of a comparatively unknown maker turning out first-rate fashionable satin-wood furniture in the full style of Sheraton quite a year before the latter arrived in London !

The bed is of satin-wood, carefully painted with classical motives, the decoration of the tabs being exceedingly happy in the variety and arrangement of their colour ; the cornice, curved as a shallow lunette, centres on three sides in a classical urn and a coat of arms, from which hang festoons of laurel also painted in natural colours in the satin-wood.

Plate VIII. *b* is a small tambour writing-cabinet veneered with amboyna-wood ; of delicate proportions and high finish, and very typical of the graceful little pieces of furniture so much in demand for boudoirs and ladies' dressing-rooms during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

Other articles of bedroom furniture remained almost similar in shape to those of the previous twenty years, but small pieces such as shaving-tables, shut-up dressing-tables and medicine-cupboards were introduced. The wardrobes were enlarged into three or four compartments, consisting of a press and chest of drawers, flanked on each side by hanging cupboards. The perforated cresting found in earlier specimens was replaced by a plain cornice, and the panels became more decorated ; plain light carving, inlay, or varied veneer taking the place of simple mahogany.

The clothes-press, with sliding shelves and a chest of drawers beneath, was still the favourite and fashionable receptacle for the coats and flowered waistcoats of George III.'s reign ; for brocaded silk and cut velvet were worn with powder by gentlemen at Court and 'in company' as late as 1800. The tax upon powder was levied in 1796, and the first year of its introduction brought in £200,000 towards the revenue of the State, proving that this fashion still remained popular ; and the many small pieces of furniture made for bedrooms or dressing- and powdering-closets were fitted with the necessary compartments for the powders and cosmetics so much in vogue.



FIG. 134.—MAHOGANY CLOTHES-PRESS. Length, 4 feet ; height, 6 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

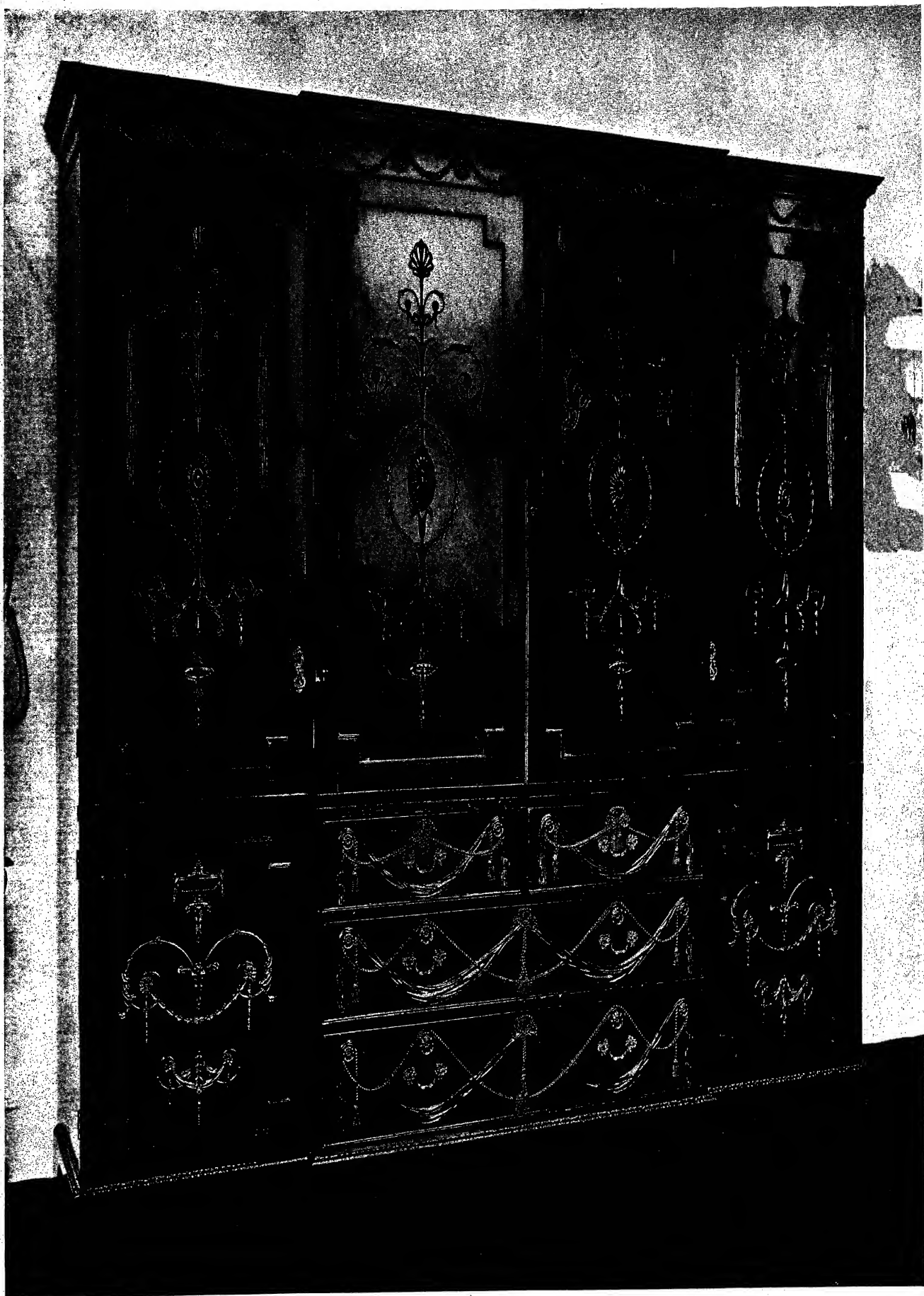


FIG. 135.—MAHOGANY WARDROBE. Height, 7 feet; length, 7 feet 4 inches.  
Property of LADY PEARSON.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 134 is a clothes-press at Harewood in the style of Adam Brothers, and dates from the first occupation of the house in 1771. The large plain and arched panels of the upper portion are headed by carved spandrels of honeysuckle design and bordered by a sunken leaf moulding cornered at the lower extremities with carved pateræ; the drawers are long, for the width of the piece is unusual; the feet consist of plainly fluted plinths; the brackets connecting these with the frame do not improve the construction, and probably did not form part of the original design.

In fig. 135, a few years later in date, the doors are carved in a light classical design of ovals, with scrolled branches and pendants of garrya with drapery, the ornament on the drawer fronts being confined to festoons interlaced with cords and tassels. The construction consists of a clothes-press flanked by slightly recessed hanging cupboards, embodying in its form the modern wardrobe; the carving is in the somewhat flat and lifeless style of Hepplewhite, but it is unwise to assign furniture of this type to an individual maker unless certain characteristics are prominently marked. The existence in 1760 of Seddon as an important upholsterer has already been referred to. Robert Gillow started work as a joiner and cabinet-maker at Lancaster early in the eighteenth century, and had established his reputation in Oxford Street at the date of his death in 1772; and so it is possible that much of the inlaid and satin-wood furniture generally attributed to Hepplewhite, Shearer, and Sheraton may be the work of the Gillows, whose firm is still in existence at the present time, and so the difficulty of attribution of pieces of this description, unless supported by documentary evidence, becomes great in a period when so many excellent firms, of whom we know so little, existed contemporaneously. In the beautifully veneered clothes-press on Plate ix., a shallow satin-wood cornice is inlaid with small dentals in ebony and boxwood; the doors, enclosing sliding shelves, are of a light-coloured and much rippled fiddle-backed mahogany bordered with zebra-wood and centring in large ovals of satin-wood, the latter being

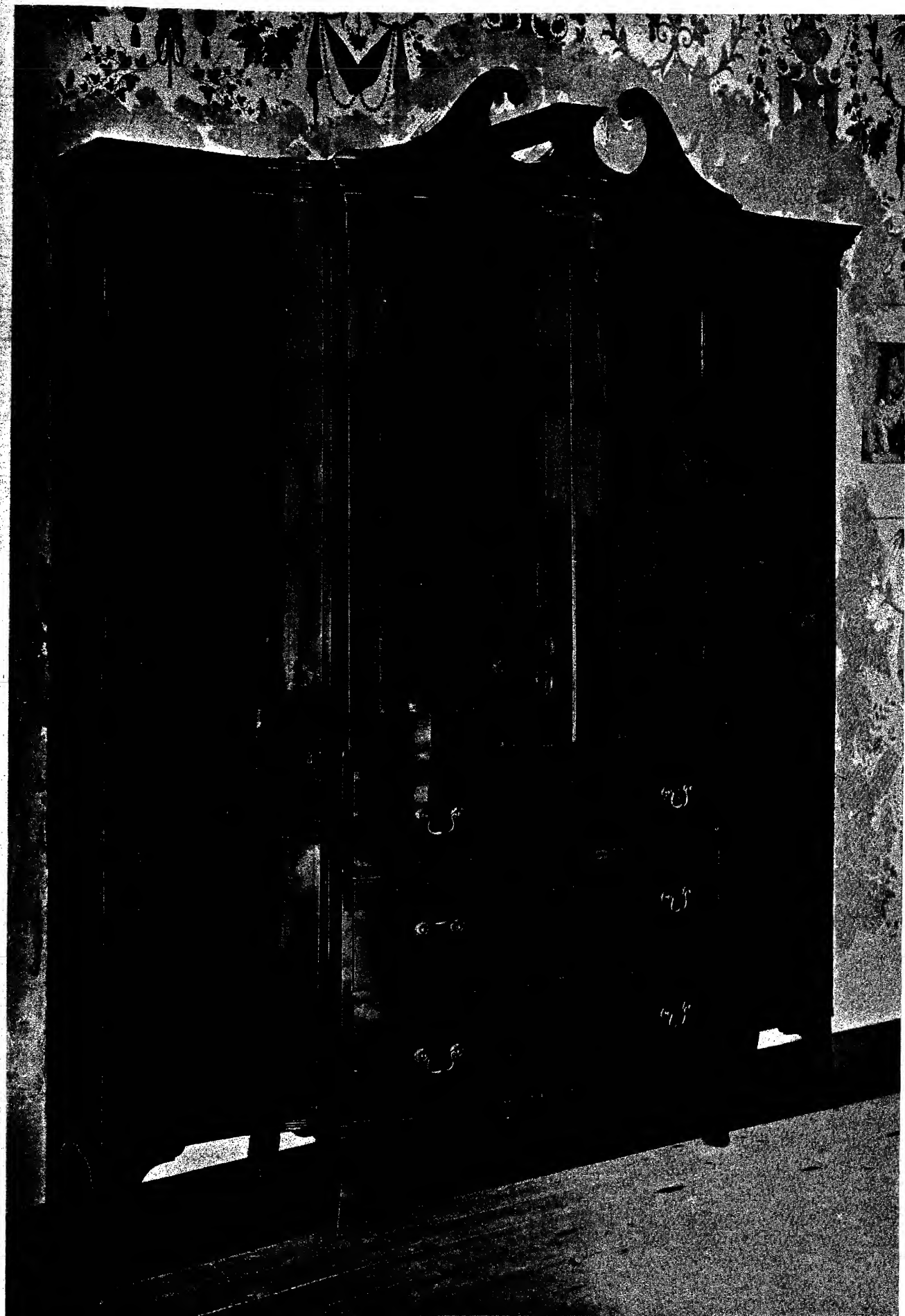


FIG. 136.—SATIN-WOOD WARDROBE. Height, 7 feet 4 inches; length, 7 feet 4 inches.  
Property of W. JAMES, Esq.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

surrounded by slight panel mouldings of box and ebony. This press, of about the date 1785, is selected to illustrate the veneered and inlaid type; the plainer examples were similar in shape, but of mahogany throughout, sometimes with fine lines or bandings of inlay. It is also represented in colour to show the peculiar character of the wood forming the groundwork of the veneer. This wood—miscalled by cabinet-makers snake-wood, sequoia, and other names—is probably a light-coloured variety of mahogany, possessing the ripple and lustre of satin-wood, but more open in the grain. In the Museum of Economic Botany, Kew Gardens, are slabs of ‘black-wood’ (*Acacia melanoxylon*) from Tasmania, exactly resembling this veneer in grain, colour, and figure, but it is impossible that any wood was exported from this island until after the landing of Captain Cook in 1777; it is certain that this particular wood was used for furniture soon after this date, but on rare occasions, and although used more freely some ten years later by Sheraton, is, and has always been, of mysterious origin and highly prized. Snake-wood is cut from the poison-bearing tree *Strychnos nux vomica*; it is brownish-grey, hard, and close-grained, and with its mackerel-striped figure presents a totally different appearance to the copper-coloured, richly rippled veneer found on Plate ix.

Another fine wardrobe and clothes-press commode is fig. 136, the lines of the hanging cupboards in this case being concave, whilst the centre portion is convex, the whole forming a serpentine front. The panels are veneered in East India satin-wood of fine lustre, bordered with the same cut on the cross and edged with tulip-wood. The veneer on the drawer fronts is of partridge-wing satin-wood and of a fine rich gold throughout. In the press (fig. 137), probably the work of Hepplewhite’s firm, the pediment is of simple classical form, the centre being inlaid with the initial G and fan ornaments. The frieze is of sycamore intersected by upright shells, a pattern that became very common after 1780; the door panels are inlaid with tall shields of a light-coloured mahogany on

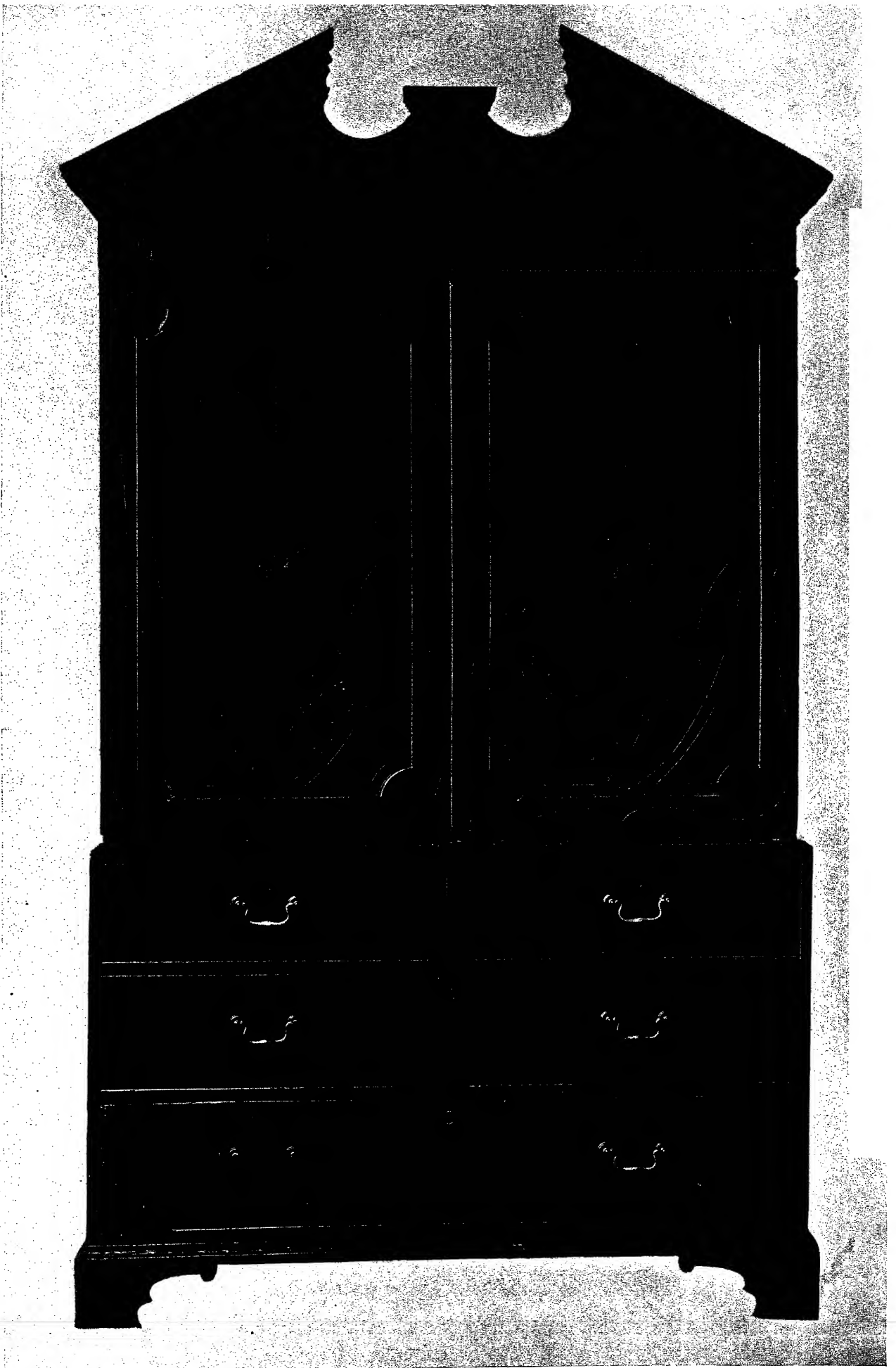


FIG. 137.—INLAID MAHOGANY CLOTHES-PRESS. Height, 7 feet 3 inches; length, 3 feet 8 inches.  
Property of J. C. H. KINDERMANN, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

a darker ground ; these again centre in smaller inlaid shields of satin-wood of the same shape, from which radiate very fine lines in holly resembling the leaders of a spider's web. Other fine lines and panel-mouldings complete the very decorative design of these doors ; the remainder of the piece is comparatively plain.

Fig. 138 is interesting, for it is made of deal, and painting here takes the place of the inlays and veneers found on the better-class presses and commodes. The imitation of the various woods is somewhat coarse, but the swags of flowers are painted with grace and skill. The lunette cornice and painted decoration infer a date about 1790. Fig. 139 is in the style of Sheraton, who arrived in London about this time. The feeling of his furniture is rather taller, and the scale smaller, than that of the previous twenty years, and even greater finish is attempted. On this piece a pediment is almost discarded, the veneer is of satin-wood, banded with fiddle-back mahogany, the top opens in three cupboards, faced with looking-glass, the lower portion being shaped as a chest of drawers, and the top drawer opens as a writing-commode. The finish is extraordinary, and the satin-wood is a very deep golden colour.

High chests of drawers were sometimes surmounted by two small cupboards, which were used for the medicines, cordials, different waters, and washes favoured chiefly by ladies. That mysterious complaint, the 'vapours,' so fashionable during the whole of the eighteenth century, with other like indispositions, called for many varieties of powders and cordials. The recipes for these elaborate concoctions were included in the cookery books of the time and were frequently manufactured at home ; the medicine-cupboard in consequence became furniture of importance. Fig. 140 represents a very highly finished example in combination with a chest of drawers, the doors are headed with delicate festoons of garrya over ovals of amorini inlaid in holly on a rosewood ground ; these and the drawer fronts are veneered with fine partridge-wing satin-wood, banded with tulip- and lines of holly-wood ; the legs much resemble those found

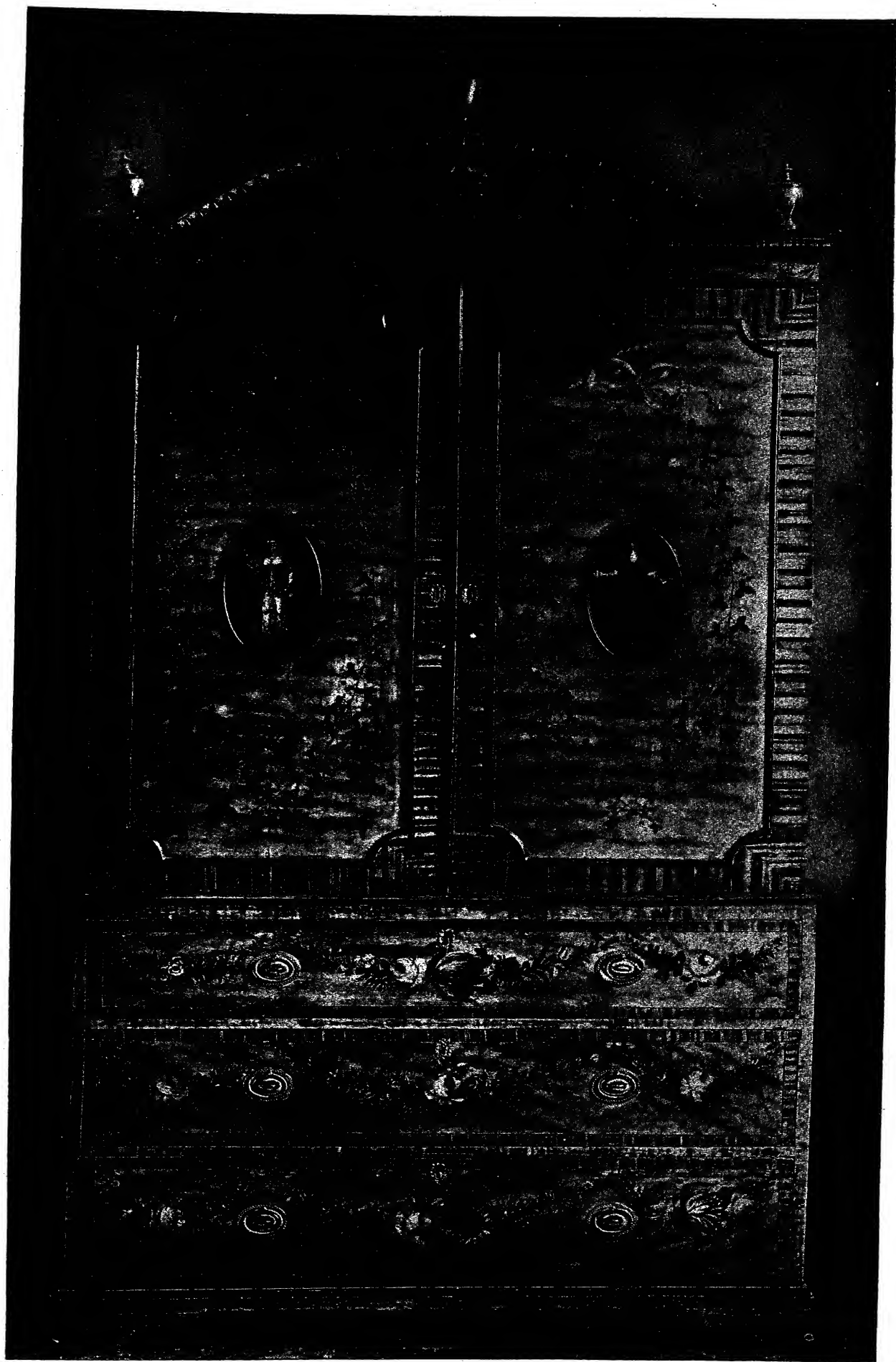


FIG. 138.—PAINTED CLOTHES-PRESS. Height, 7 feet ; width, 3 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the REV. J. O. STEPHENS.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

on Dutch furniture of about 1785. The satin-wood candlesticks correspond in period, and the vase is one of a pair beautifully inlaid with sycamore and burnt holly-wood, originally no doubt made for a small sideboard. Another and plainer example of these medicine cupboards, again mounted on a chest of drawers, is shown in fig. 141; here the veneer is of mahogany throughout, the relief introduced being the usual banding of tulip-wood with fine lines of holly. The handles of mahogany, enclosed in brass settings, point to a date after 1790.

The small bedroom commode (fig. 142), one of a pair from Harewood, is some ten years earlier in date than the two preceding pieces, and belongs to the earlier period of Shearer; the lines are exceedingly simple and attractive, and all ornament is confined to a centre banding of garrya husks and fluted headings to the legs.

Fig. 143 is a very much later example and of Sheraton make. The top and lower shelf are of green marble, the tambour front being of alternate satin-wood and mahogany strips, and the delicate cylindrical satin-wood legs are very distinctive of the small and elegant furniture made during the last fifteen years of the century.

Sets of satin-wood furniture for bedrooms were made during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, but the veneer was still very expensive. Chests of drawers and wardrobes with their original veneer of satin-wood are consequently by no means common, and much that passes muster as the work of this time is of old mahogany construction, veneered some thirty or forty years ago. The inlay introduced by Chippendale, Hepplewhite, Shearer, Sheraton, and Gillow on bedroom furniture is open and reticent in its distribution, and a certain simplicity invariably pervades the whole design. Great caution should be therefore exercised in the purchase of elaborately inlaid or even plain satin-wood furniture, for it costs but little in these times to cut marqueterie in packed slices with a machine-saw, face old mahogany chests of drawers, wardrobes, and tables with satin-wood, and inlay them with good designs.

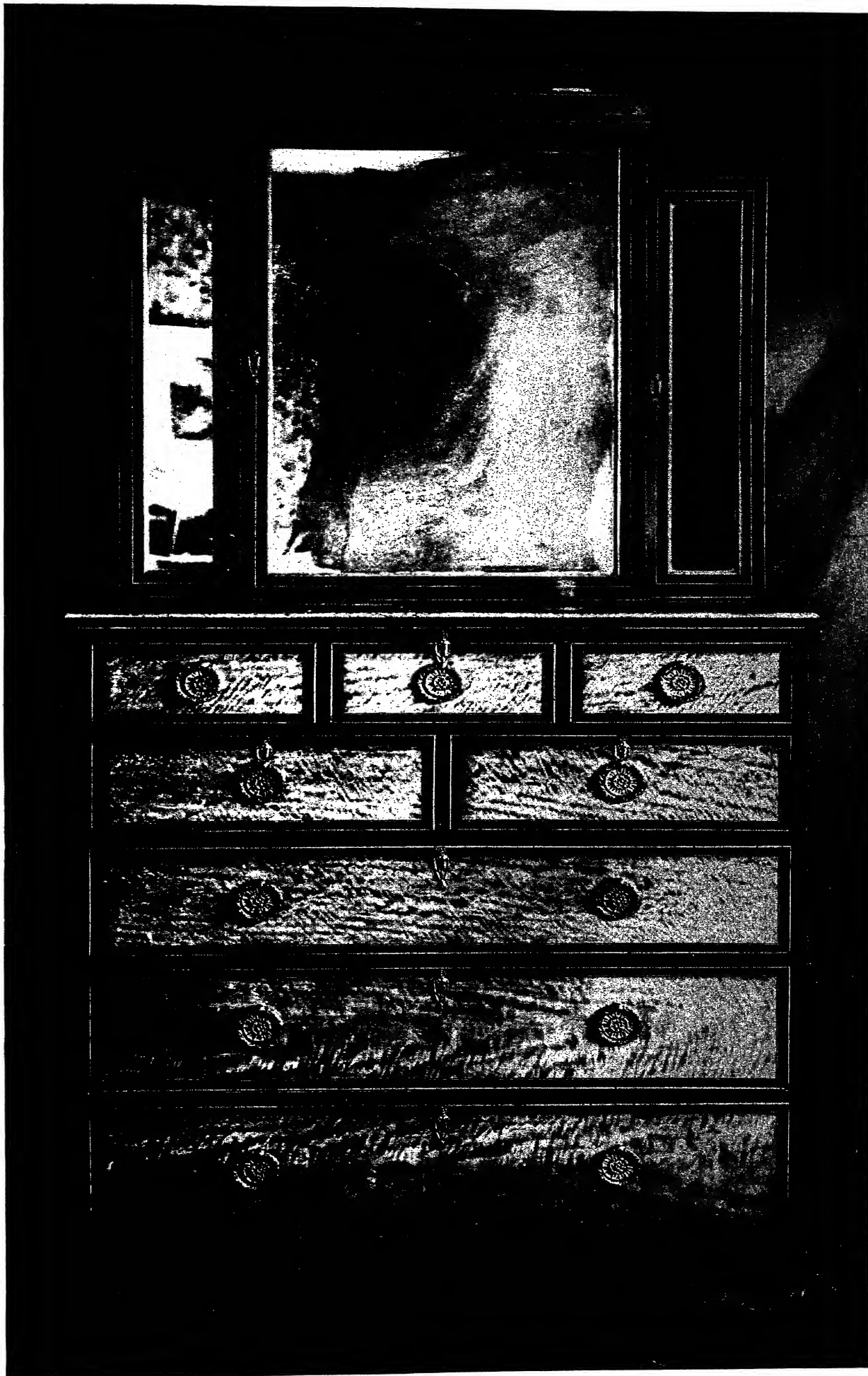


FIG. 139.—BOOK-CASE AND WRITING CHEST OF DRAWERS.  
Property of E. MARSHALL HALL, Esq.



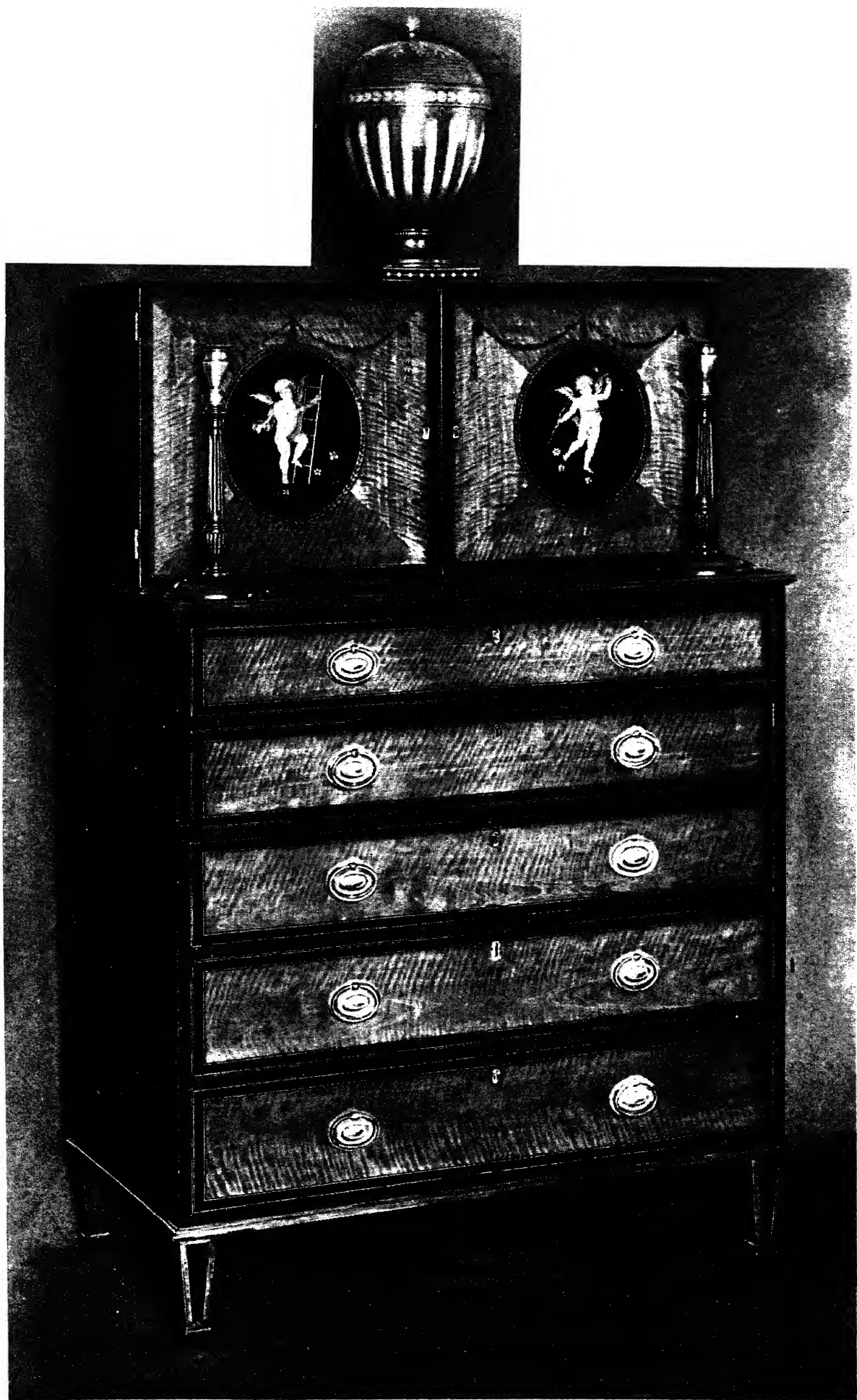


FIG. 140.—SATIN-WOOD CHEST OF DRAWERS WITH CUPBOARD. Height, 5 feet ; length, 2 feet 11 inches ; width, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of W. JAMES, Esq.





FIG. 141.—MAHOGANY CHEST OF DRAWERS WITH CUPBOARD.  
Height, 5 feet 6 inches; length, 3 feet 6 inches. Property of T. BASSETT, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 144 is a good and genuine example of a commode chest of drawers of unusual shape. The three drawers forming a frieze are veneered with sycamore, inlaid with pateræ and swags of green-stained garrya. The sides, which open as cupboards, and small front drawers are inlaid with vases, arabesques, and honeysuckle pattern, in coloured woods, the other drawers being in plain satin-wood, the tulip-wood banding that surrounds these is unusually broad, and the satin-wood feet are an adaptation of earlier Adam design. The colour of the whole piece is



FIG. 142.—MAHOGANY COMMODO. Height, 2 feet 10 inches; length, 2 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

exceedingly delicate, and the character of its ornament points to the work of Hepplewhite.

A plainer specimen, but veneered with beautifully figured wood, is shown in fig. 145. The corners are bevelled and finish in simple stops; the handles are of the octagon shape adopted about 1785, the balls to the feet being additions. The top forms a dressing-drawer, divided into numerous partitions for the paint, cosmetics, and powders that formed so important an addition to Georgian beauty, immortalised by Gains-

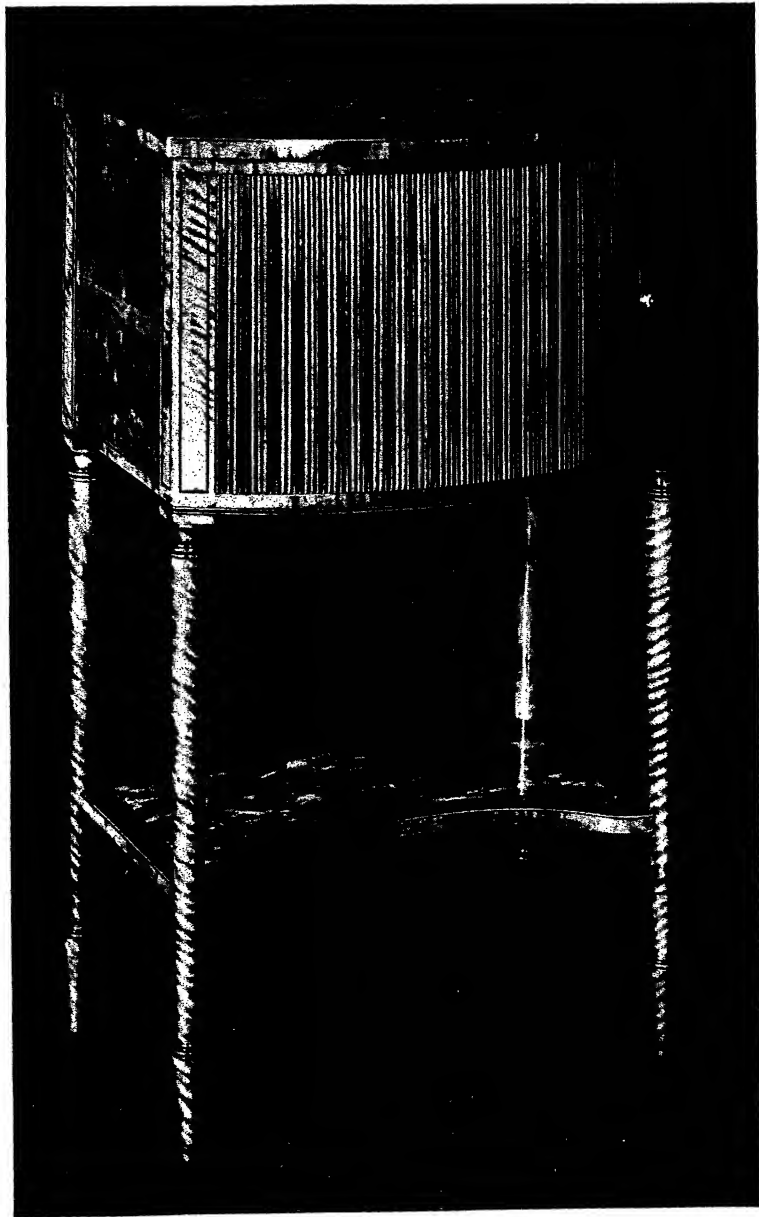


FIG. 143.—SATIN-WOOD AND MARBLE TAMBOUR COMMODE.  
Height, 2 feet 10 inches. Property of E. MARSHALL HALL, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

borough, Reynolds, Romney, Morland and others. Unfortunately these artists seldom introduce furniture into their pictures. The three ladies Waldegrave, by Sir Joshua, are grouped round a small satin-wood table, but as a rule draperies hide the furniture occupied by his sitters. A realistic treatment of interiors was seldom represented in pictures of this time, so that these celebrated artists are of little use to us in verifying the furniture of this period.

Fig. 146 is a chest of drawers in the manner of Sheraton, for the

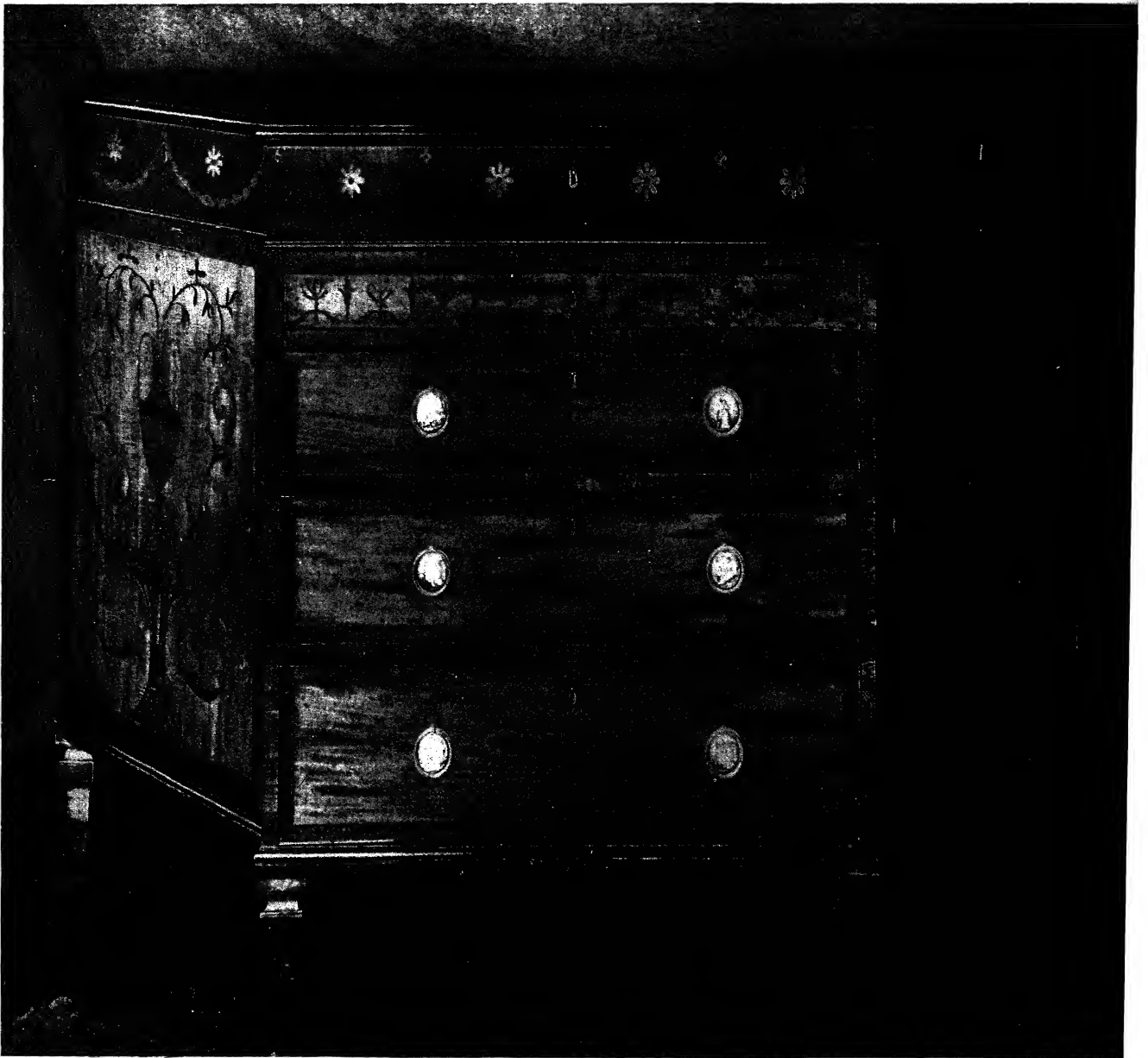


FIG. 144.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 2 feet 9 inches; width, 5 feet.  
Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

## ENGLISH FURNITURE

drawers are narrow, with the lightness and grace of line peculiar to this designer; the use of the broad band of sycamore, with which the top and sides are veneered, is also a very favourite feature in his work; the drawer fronts are of satin-wood bordered with rose-wood and inlaid with a very fine chequer in box and ebony. The quick serpentine curve of the front, ending in small corners, was a fashion adopted after 1790, for lightness and elegance of line became more distinctly marked as the century approached its end.

Fig. 147 is another inlaid piece of beautiful finish probably for use in a fashionably furnished bedroom of 1780. It is in the form of a chest of drawers, surmounted by two small cupboards for medicines, etc. The



FIG. 145.—SATIN-WOOD CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 6 inches. Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

doors are veneered with satin-wood bordered with king-wood on the cross, the centre of the panels being occupied by ovals inlaid with classical figures in holly, surrounded by a key pattern border of ebony and holly. The top of this beautiful little cabinet is veneered in yew with an inlaid panel of other woods, and mounted in a bold framing of gadrooned brass; the sides are also inlaid with classical objects, the owl of Athene in an ivy tree, and an Etruscan vase. The drawer-fronts are decorated with inlaid sprays of flowers, entwined round a Cupid's bow and arrow, and the key-patterned base is capped with a rather bold brass moulding. The wood throughout is most carefully selected, and the effect of colour is extremely rich and harmonious.



FIG. 146.—SATIN-WOOD INLAID CHEST OF DRAWERS. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 8 inches. Property of E. MARSHALL HALL, Esq.





FIG. 147.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD DRAWERS WITH CUPBOARD. Height, 5 feet ; length, 3 feet ; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of the Hon. Mrs. WHITTAKER.



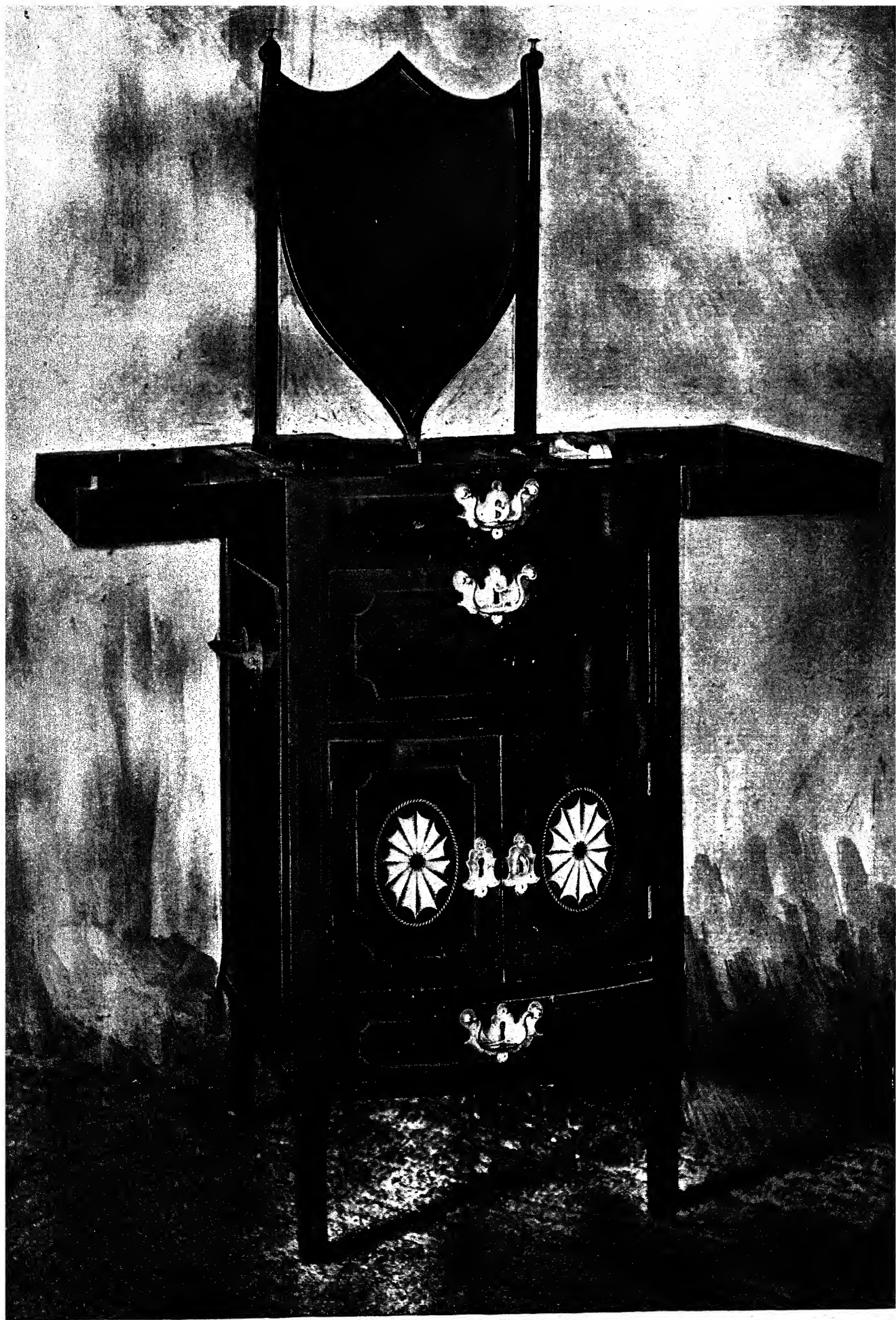


FIG. 148.—SHAVING-TABLE COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches ; width, 1 foot 7 inches ; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of Miss TYNDAL.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Another interesting variety of dressing-room furniture is shown in fig. 148, a shaving-table commode of about 1775. The top, which opens in two portions, discloses a series of partitions for powders and soap, etc.; at the back is a shield-shaped glass, supported on arms which let up and down, and can be entirely concealed when the top is shut. The cupboard doors are inlaid with fan-shaped pateræ, the handles and key-plates being rather earlier in style than the rest of the work. Other objects for bedrooms, such as cheval glasses, originally called Psyche, from an allusion to an incident in the fable, were introduced towards the

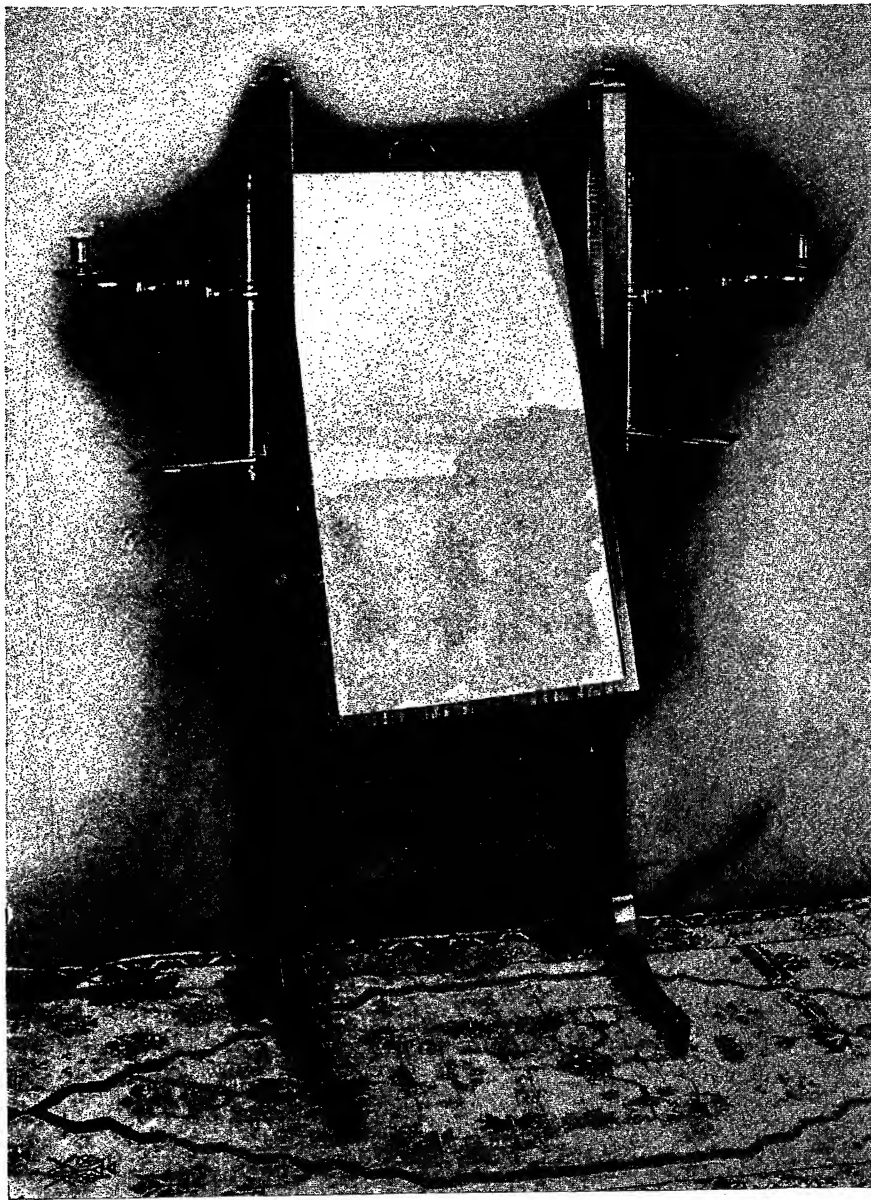


FIG. 149.—SATIN-WOOD CHEVAL GLASS. Height, 5 feet; width, 2 feet 2 inches. Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

end of the eighteenth century from France. Fig. 149 is made practical by the ingenuity of its construction, as it runs up and down upon a chained strapping contained within the supports. The side-brackets and candle-holders may be of later origin, but such appliances are frequently found at this date. The inlaid box (fig. 150), of about 1775, veneered with satin-wood and inlaid with a vase and rough festoons in green-stained wood, was perhaps made for a jewel case; the tambour top is very unusual, and the strong handles infer that it is early in period.

The fashionable drawing-room from 1775 until the end of the century may be described as elegant and empty. The lacquer and tortoiseshell cabinets, or those inlaid with coloured marbles and stones, and other highly prized importations of this description, had given place to more formal-looking commodes, veneered and inlaid with rare woods. The word commode is of French origin, dating from about 1700, and was

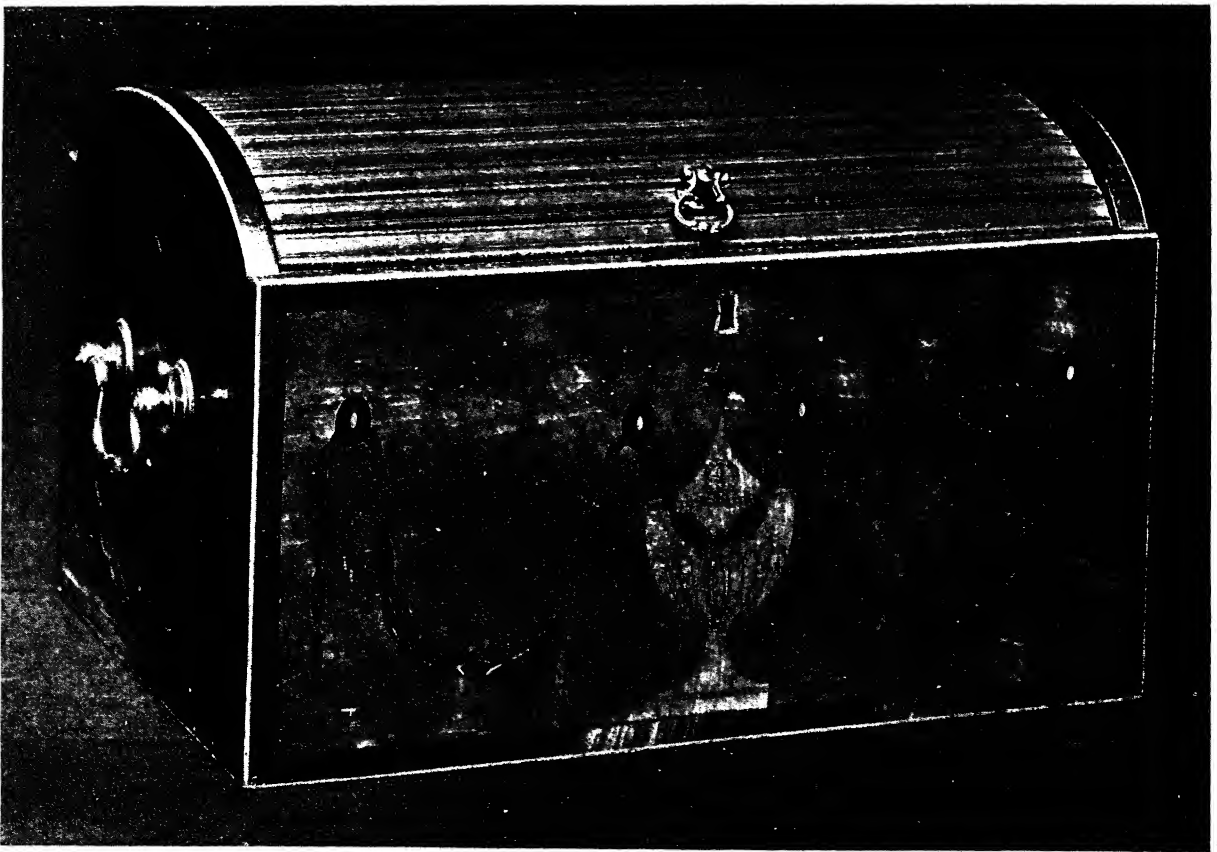


FIG. 150.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD BOX. Length, 1 foot; height, 7 inches; depth, 9 inches.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

evidently regarded as somewhat of a novelty even eighteen years later, for the Duchesse d'Orleans, writing in March 1718, says, 'The present the Duchesse de Berry has made to my daughter is very charming, she has given her a commode; a commode is a deep table with large drawers and beautiful ornaments.' The original invention no doubt answered to our chest of drawers, and was termed a commode, as it dispensed with the inconvenience of the chest or coffer, for until the end of the seventeenth century clothes and linen were kept in chests, and when some article was required that lay at the bottom the entire contents had to be turned over. The earlier decorative examples were made in the fashion of Boulle, inlaid with metal on tortoise-shell; this was soon discarded in favour of inlaid woods, and the commode soon became the most ornamental

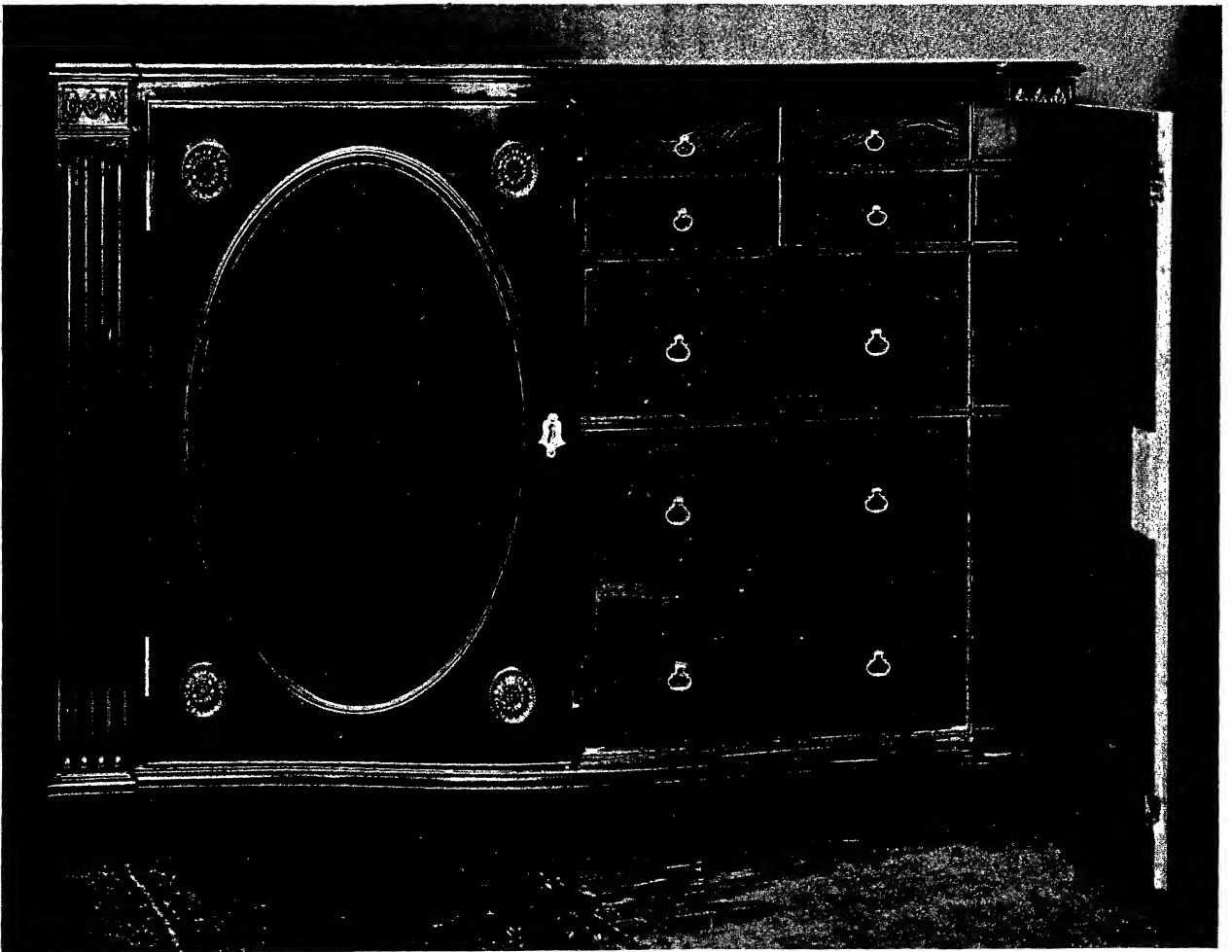


FIG. 151.—MAHOGANY COMMUNE. Height, 2 feet 9 inches; depth, 1 foot 7 inches; length, 4 feet 8 inches. Property of Miss SCHOLFIELD.



FIG. 152.—GREEN LACQUER COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 4 feet 2 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

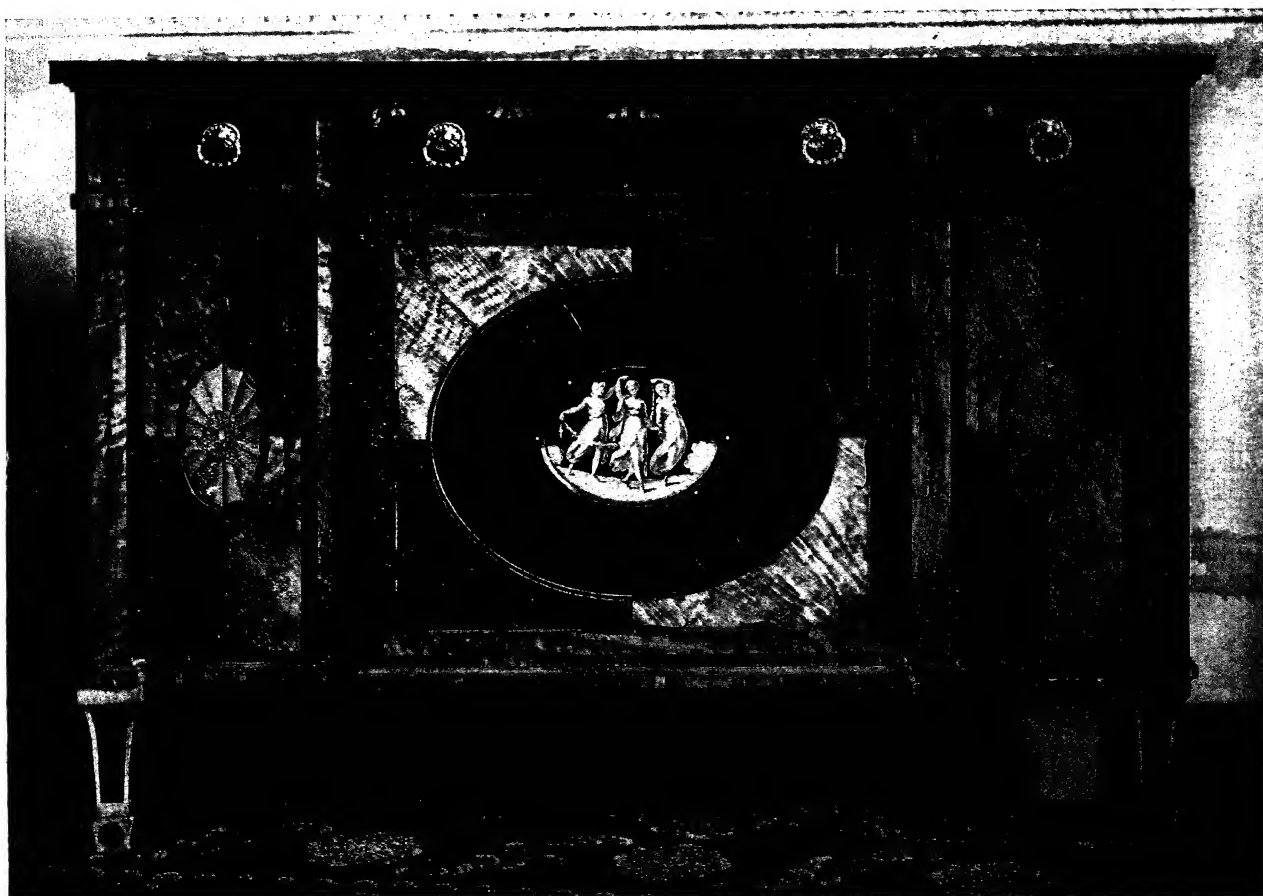


FIG. 153.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 4 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



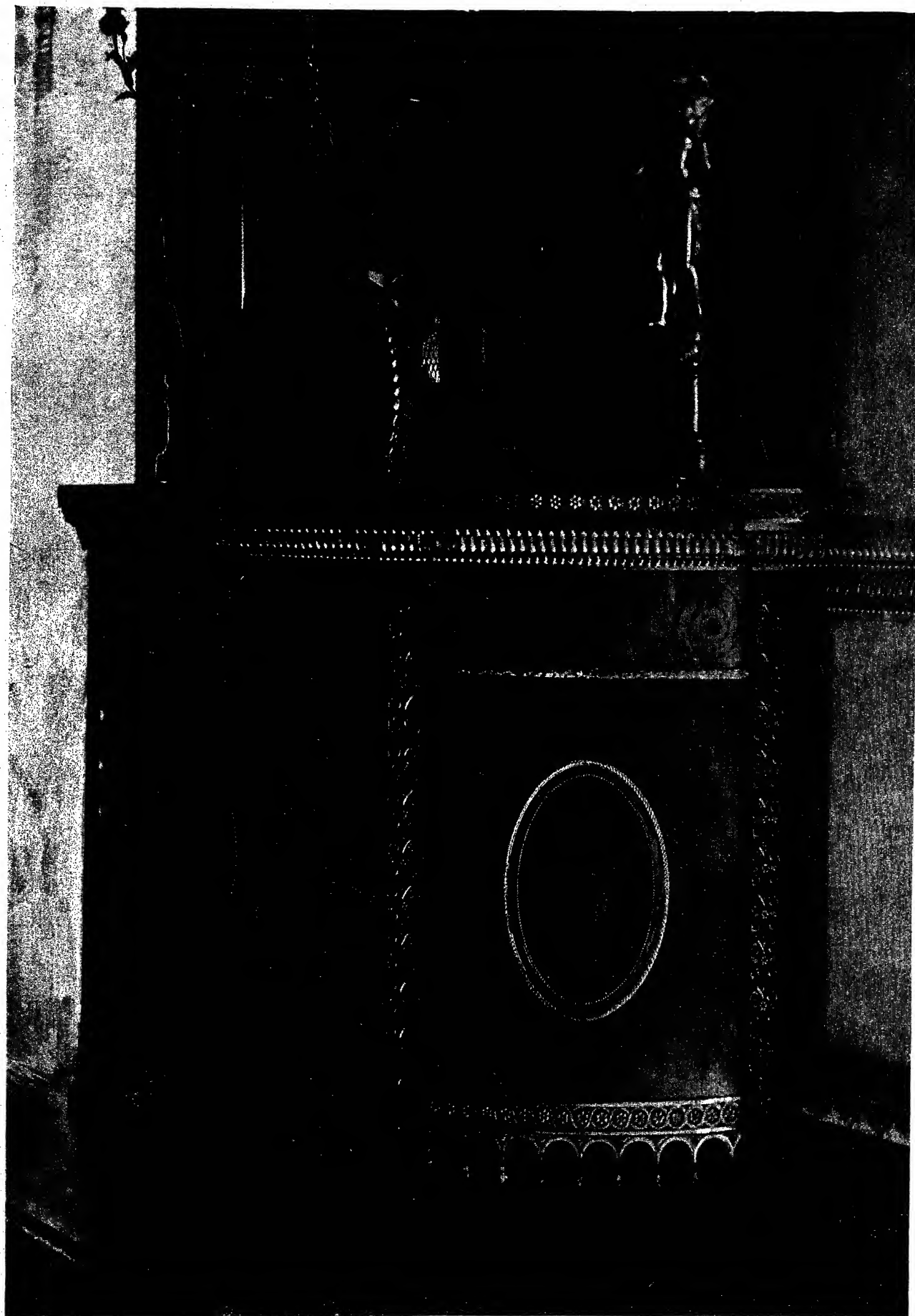


FIG. 154.—PAINTED AND INLAID SYCAMORE COMMODOE. Height, 2 feet 9 inches; length, 4 feet 6 inches. Property of the EARL OF JERSEY.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

and highly prized piece of furniture in French rooms. It has been shown in figs. 27 and 28, that Chippendale in 1767 was copying the shape, inlaying it with coloured garlands of flowers on satin and other rare woods, and ornamenting the tops, corners, and bases with metal mountings. A little later, in conjunction with Adam, he introduced a more severe style inlaid with classical figures and ornament, and even more elaborately furnished with metal mountings, but it is rare to find at any time mahogany commodes, for this shape was not considered suitable for the dining-room or library, and in mahogany was too heavy in colour for the drawing-room. Very occasionally such pieces were made for plate and wine, either to supplement a sideboard or to take its place in a small room.

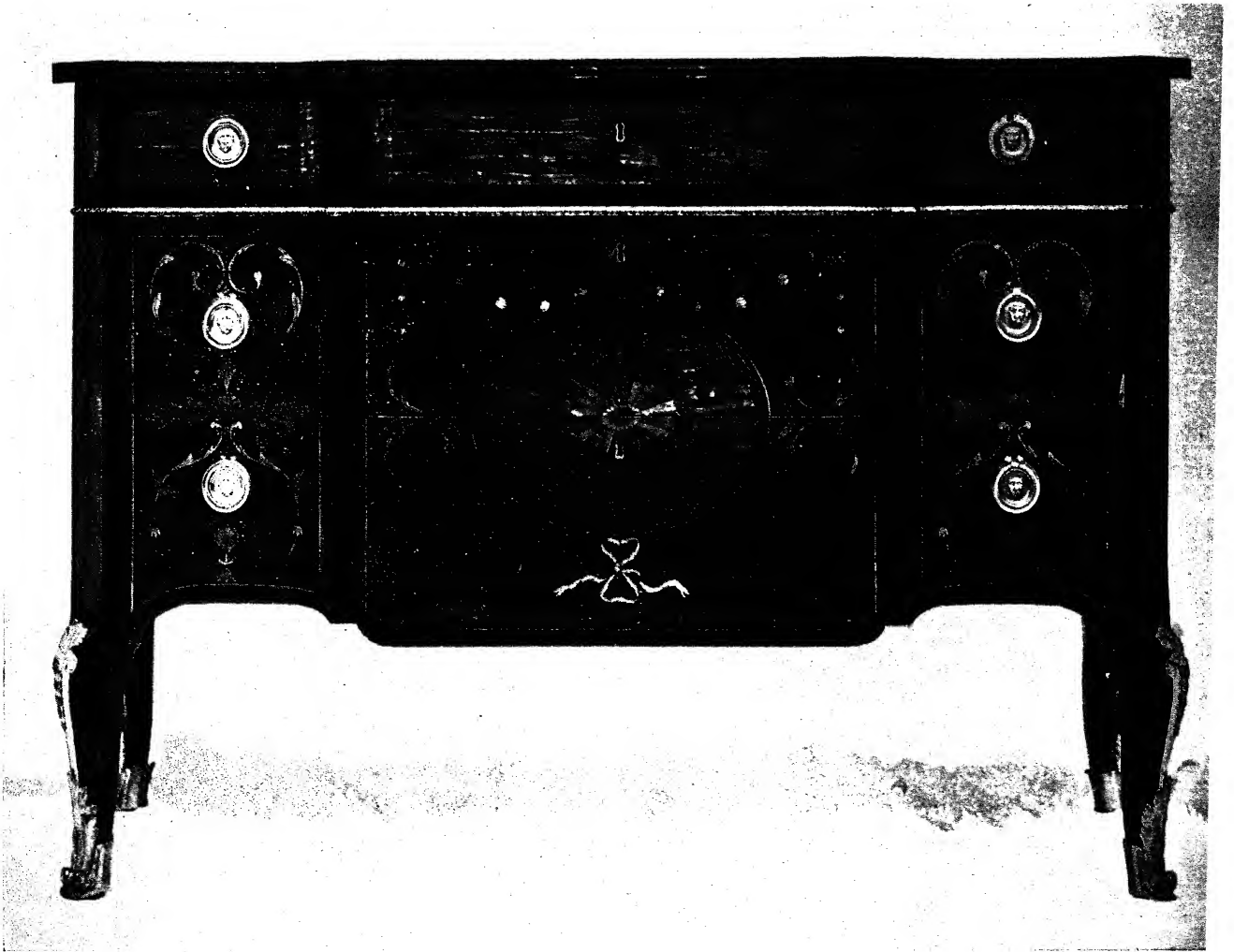


FIG. 155.—INLAID SYCAMORE COMMUNE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 4 feet 2 inches.  
Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.





FIG. 156.—INLAID SYCAMORE COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 4 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF RADNOR.

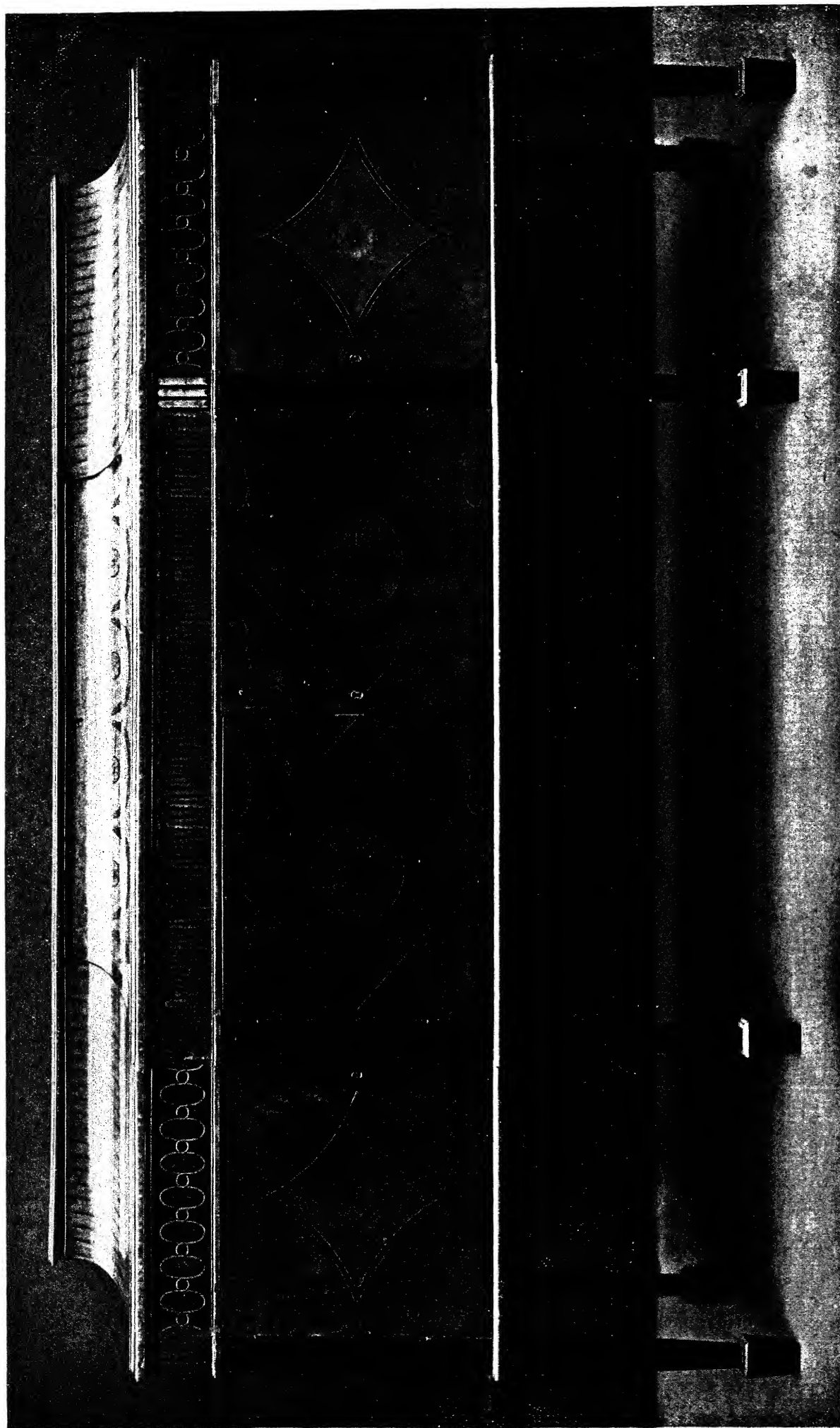


FIG. 157.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD COMMODE. Length, 5 feet; height, 3 feet 6 inches.  
Property of R. H. BENSON, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 151 is in the early and rather sad style of Hepplewhite. The design of the doors is very simple, and the front is slightly serpentine, the drawers within being of oak banded with rose-wood. Eventually commodes were often made in pairs, and they generally occupied the wall space opposite the windows, that between the windows being still filled with console-tables with their over-glasses. The ground of inlaid commodes was generally of satin-wood or sycamore, sometimes painted, but rarely found of mahogany. The lacquered commode designed by Adam for Osterley, already given in fig. 25, is certainly not after 1770; but the commode (fig. 152) from Harewood may be a few years later in date, for the carved wood is gilt to imitate the metal mountings, and the lacquer design is poor and disconnected. The green ground is not very brilliant, but the inside, filled with various drawers, is a fine scarlet, an interesting example of what must have been a cheap piece of furniture probably designed by Adam for some unimportant room in the house.

The beautiful commode (fig. 153) was designed by Adam and made by Chippendale for Harewood at the same time as figs. 50 and 51, and is included with them in the bill of Chippendale and Haig, dated 1772, in Lord Harewood's possession. It is severe in form, but exquisite in detail and execution; the satin-wood is of the finest quality, and the drawing of the designs and the ivory inlaid figures of the centre panel most accurate and careful. There are no metal embellishments to the corners, legs, or frieze, and it represents the best taste of Adam and Chippendale in this kind of furniture. It was to commodes such as these that the skill and attention of these two great men were directed, and though the result may be deficient in picturesque interest, in perfect execution they are unexampled in the history of English furniture. In the reproduction of fig. 154, a fine commode also by Adam made for Osterley, the detail is unfortunately indistinct owing to its fixed position between two windows. The shape is semi-circular, and the ground is

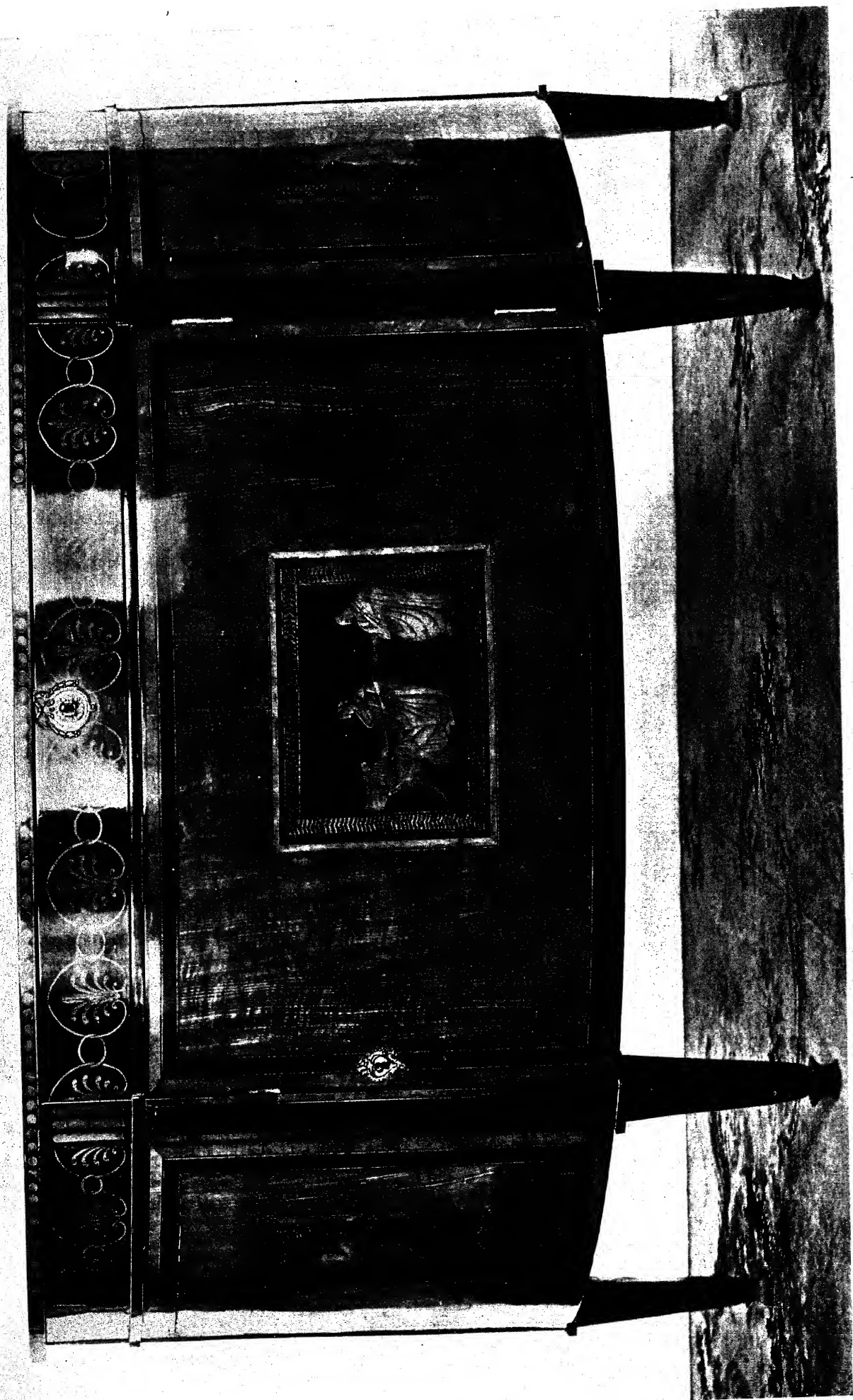


FIG. 158.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD AND MAHOGANY COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 9 inches ; length, 3 feet 6 inches ; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of A. HALL, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

veneered with sycamore; the cornice and pilasters are of rosewood, banded and covered with elaborate metal ornaments; on the side panels are dancing figures, inlaid and etched on a rosewood ground; the centre panel, bordered in octagon, contains a painting by Angelica Kauffmann; the base finishes in a curious imbricated border of metal-work. It would be interesting to know the original cost of this very ornate commode, but when Mr. Child paid the bills for the house and furniture, he threw them into the fire, so unfortunately no record remains.

It is evident that important cabinet-makers after 1770 concentrated

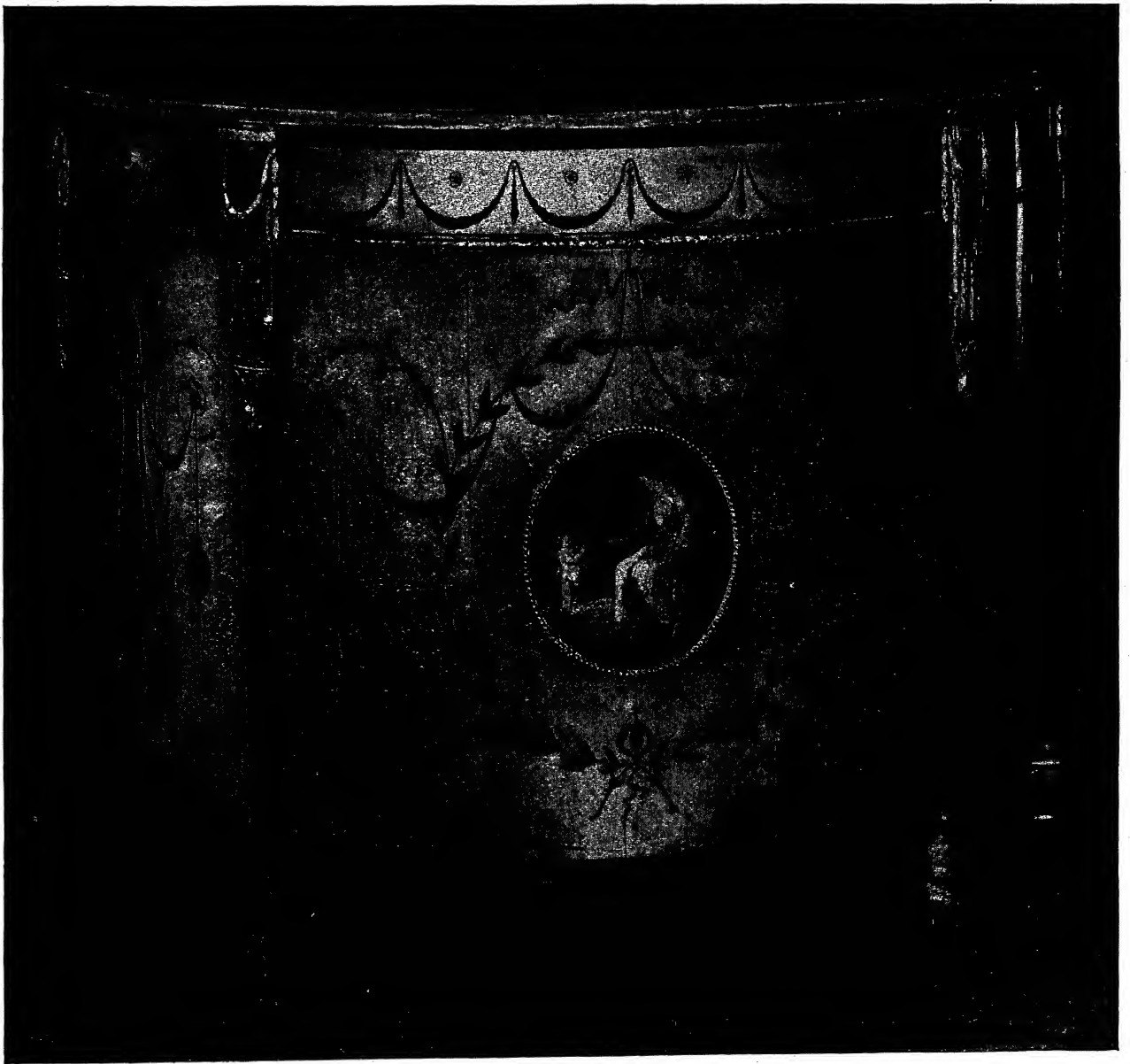


FIG. 159.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 6 inches.  
Property of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

their strongest efforts on the commode, that it was the most fashionable piece of furniture, and that a certain amount of competition existed in the production and patronage of this article. The specimens under the influence of Adam were more or less flat-fronted; the ornament was inlaid and no painting was introduced, but in every period imitation has succeeded reality, so marqueterie followed carving, and painting marqueterie. To constantly introduce variety into apparently the same limited shape must have been difficult, and it is remarkable what ingenuity was called forth in the process. The commode (fig. 155) is exceedingly simple and good. The lines of the inlay are well considered, and the colour of the sycamore or hair-wood veneer is quiet and attractive. The ornament is open, and yet fills the spaces admirably; the legs are very slightly cabrioled, and mounted with metal, showing that the date is not later than 1770.

Fig. 156 is of about the same date, and probably by Hepplewhite, for it presents certain strong characteristics of his work, such as the honeysuckle frieze being drawn out and the spaces round the amorini miscalculated; the latter are of holly on a ground of snake-wood; the inlaid top is surrounded by a banding of metal-work, repeated in finer fillets beneath; the brass legs and feet are deliberate copies from Adam. Another of those straight-fronted commodes, of about 1778, mounted on tall side-board legs, is shown in fig. 157. The coved top, inlaid in two series of flutings and one of laurel wreaths, is rare, and gives great distinction to the upper portion; this alternation is again repeated in the inlay of the frieze. The design on the panels of the four doors is extremely simple, and in accordance with the framings and legs; the whole is in such admirable proportion that it suggests the satin-wood work of Chippendale's firm, which still held the most important position amongst cabinet-makers, and doubtless provided much of the better-class satin-wood furniture attributed to other makers.

Fig. 158 is a still later design, probably adapted from Hepplewhite,

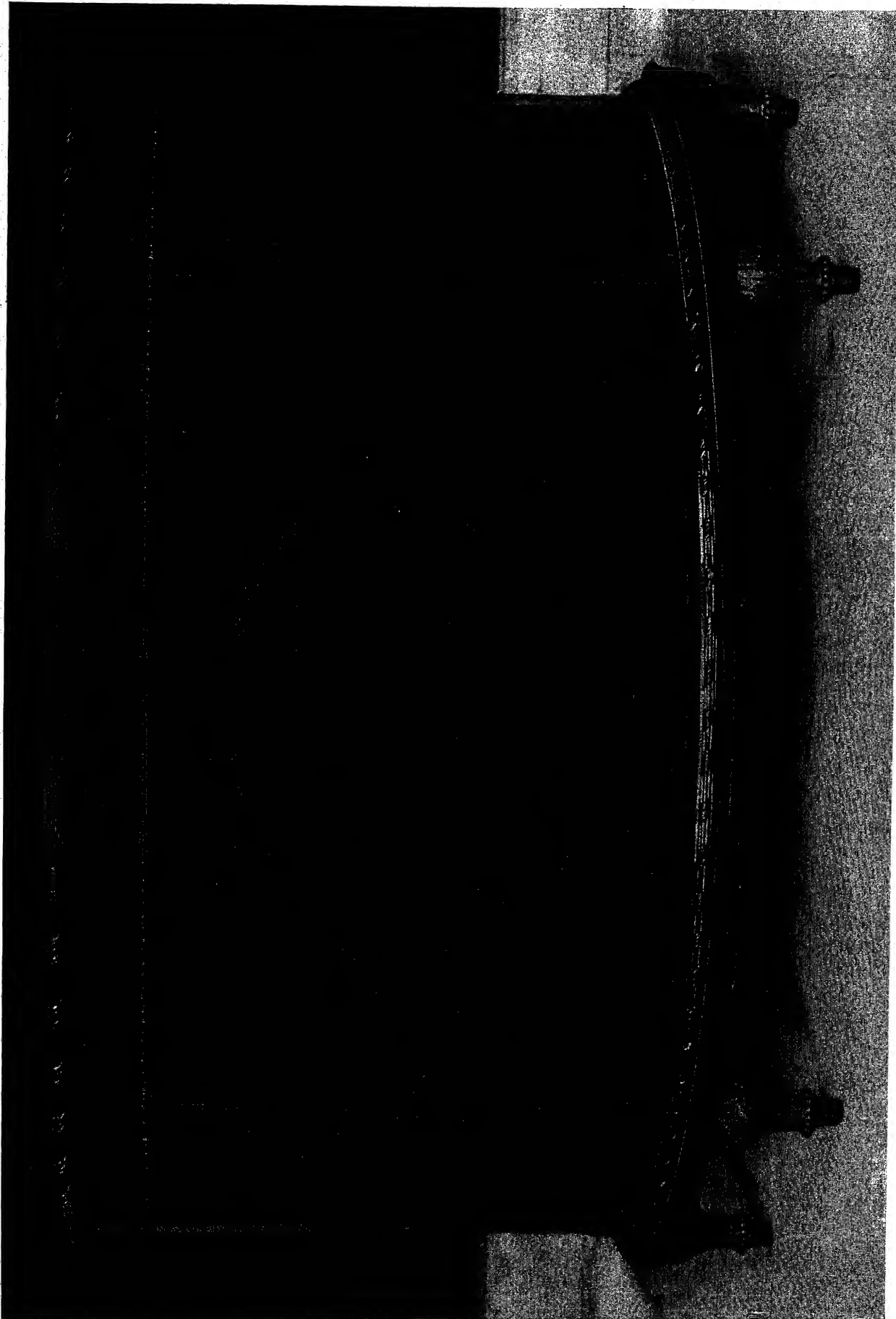


FIG. 160.—SATIN-WOOD INLAID AND PAINTED COMMODE. Height, 2 feet 11 inches; length, 3 feet 9 inches; depth, 1 foot 6 inches. Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

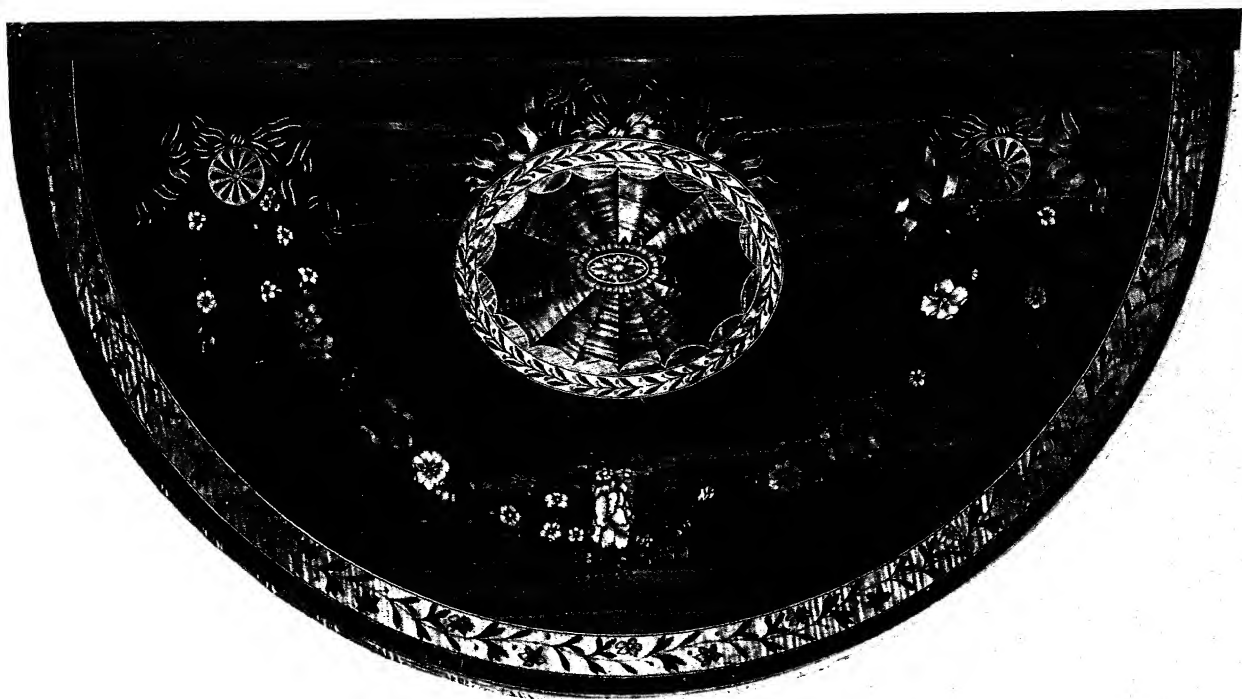


FIG. 161.—TOP OF COMMODOE.

for it has many of his faults without his excellent execution. The colour of the satin-wood is fine, although its figure is not remarkable; it by no means follows that flashy satin-wood is any sign of antiquity—such veneer being often found on doubtful pieces; a clear deep yellow is indicative of old wood, the orange colour so frequently seen being produced in the polish. The frieze of this commode is of high finish, and is very superior to the square inlaid panels of the sides, the drawing of the figures being very elementary; the shape is semi-circular and mounted upon a taper leg, that is a long and slender reproduction of an earlier style. A very good specimen of the ordinary better-class commode is shown on Plate x.; it is semi-circular, and dependent for decoration on inlaid work and the colour of the satin-wood, for it is without painting or metal mountings.

Fig. 159 is another specimen, bleached in colour and inlaid with the arabesques and festoons of 1775-80. The inlaid figures are exceedingly graceful, and the large long lines of the design surrounding them are in the manner of Pergolesi. This artist accompanied Robert Adam to England on his return from Italy, and remained here until the end of the

PLATE X (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

SATINWOOD COMMODE

HEIGHT, 2 FEET 11 $\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

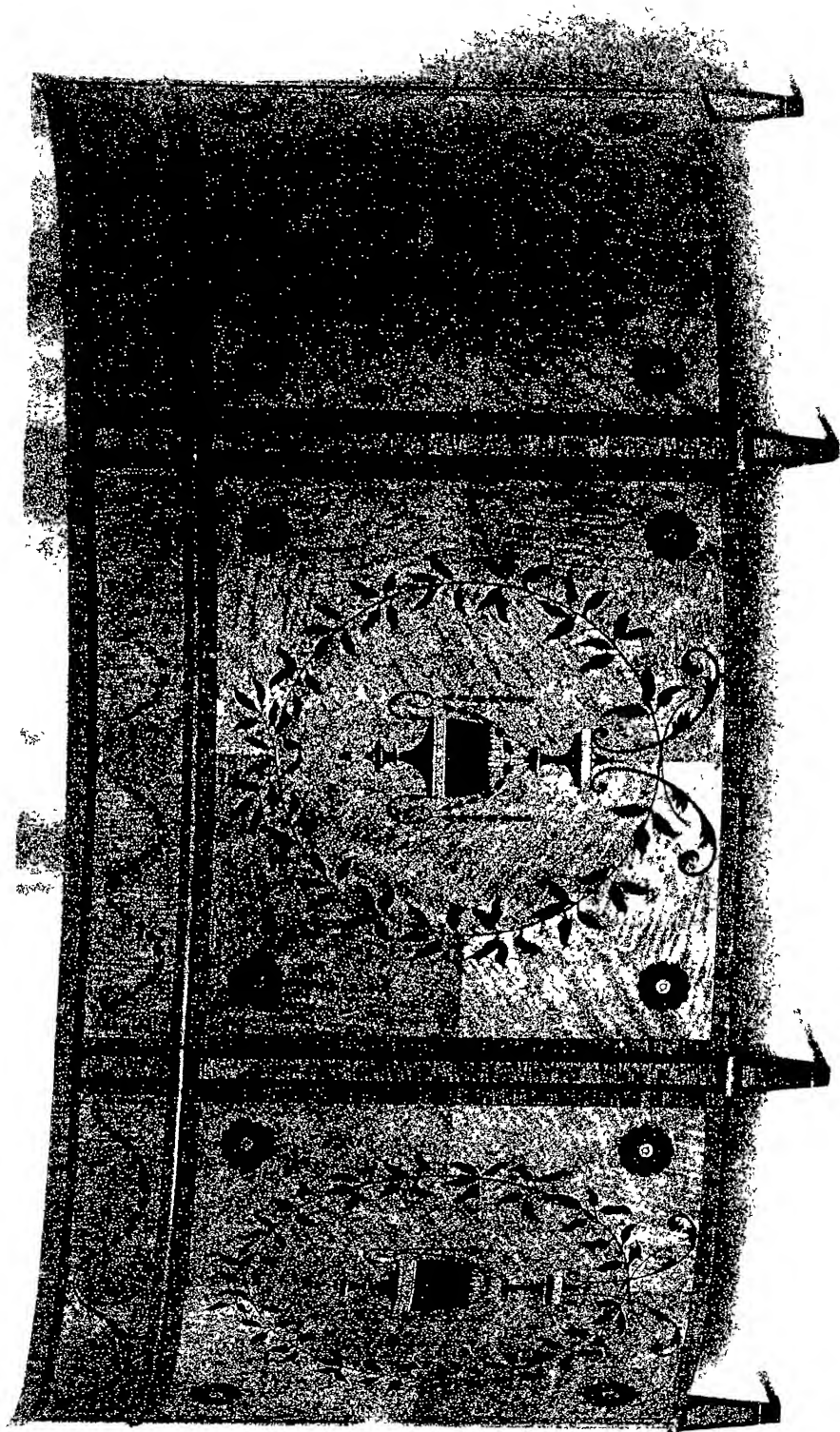
LENGTH, 5 " 6 "

DEPTH, 1 FOOT 10 "

PROPERTY OF

ALFRED LITTLETON, Esq.







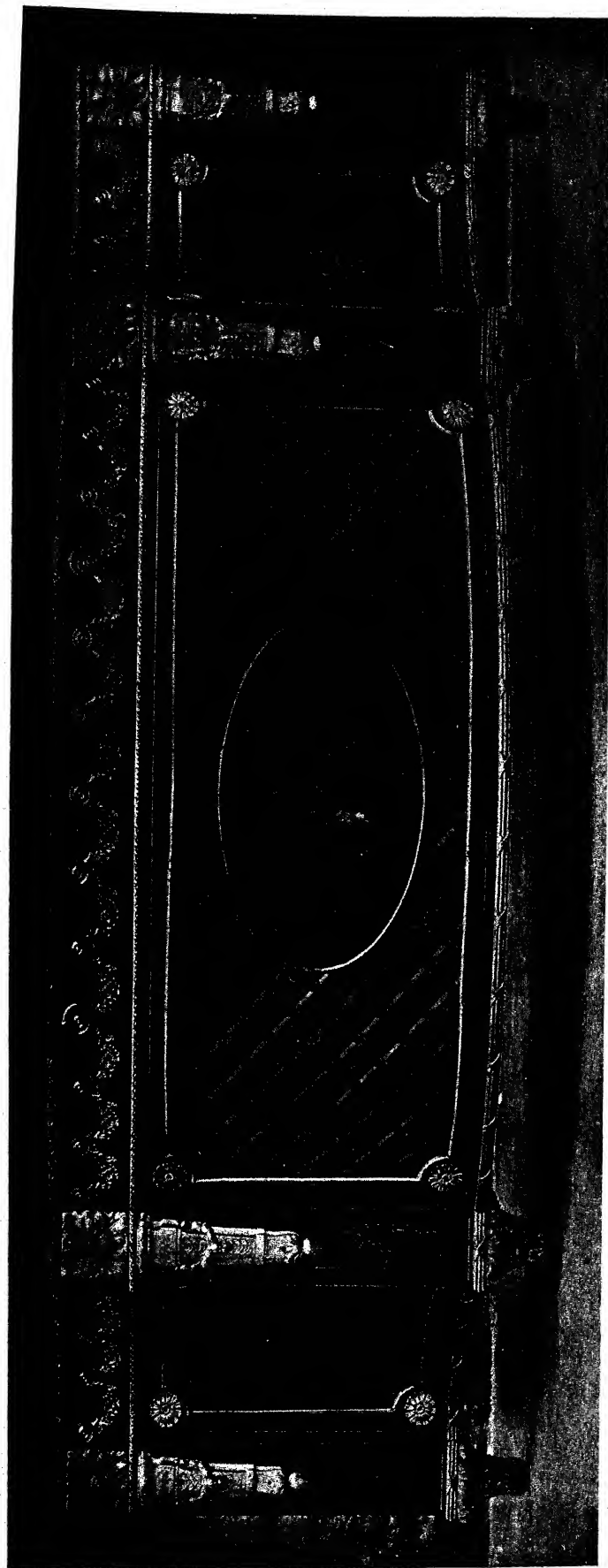


FIG. 162.—INLAID AND PAINTED SATIN-WOOD COMMODE.

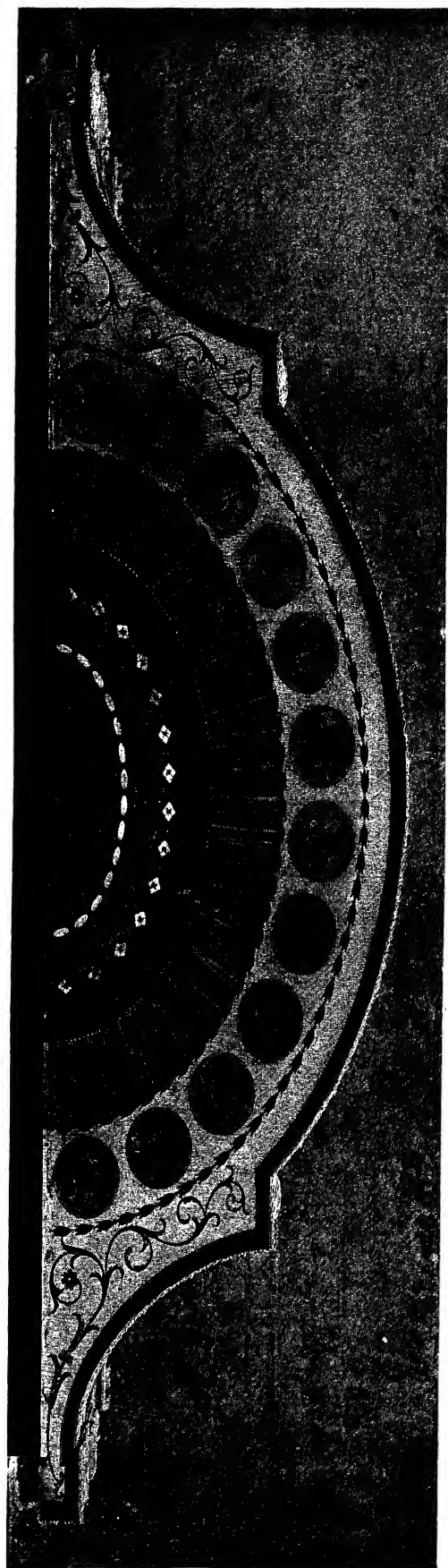


FIG. 163.—TOP OF SAME

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

century, working for the celebrated Adelphi firm, designing and painting furniture with garlands of flowers, figures, and landscapes. He published a book of designs, drawn between 1777 and 1801, and was largely responsible, in conjunction with Cipriani, Angelica Kauffmann, and Zucchi, all members of our Royal Academy, for the introduction of painted furniture. These artists were of the greatest assistance to Robert Adam, not only for the introduction and carrying out of the colour schemes so necessary to his style, but, in the case of Pergolesi and Zucchi, actually designing architecture for the firm. This combination must have been rapid and industrious, for Angelica Kauffmann married Zucchi in 1781, returning with him to Italy in the following year. Cipriani, who came to England in 1755, is thus described by Fuseli :—‘The fertility of his invention, the graces of his composition, and the seductive elegance of his forms, were only surpassed by the probity of his character, the simplicity of his manners, and the benevolence of his heart.’ His painting in connection with furniture was represented by graceful compositions of classical figures, painted with scholarly knowledge and a most refined sense of colour. As he died in 1785 and the Zucchis left London in 1781, and as painted furniture was not popular before 1775, it leaves but little time for its evolution at the hands of these particular artists.

In fig. 160, inlay, painting, and metal-mounting are combined in a beautiful and elaborate manner. It is semi-circular and veneered with West India satin-wood, which is long in the figure. The top (fig. 161) is inlaid with a framed patera of sycamore, and one large garland of flowers in coloured woods ; this is headed by blue ribbon bows and wheel pateræ, the whole being surrounded by a flower border inlaid on a broad band of sycamore. A delicate inlay of urns and leaf sprays forms the frieze, the doors and sides being similarly treated with garlands and vases of flowers ; a painting of Venus dressed in a Reynolds costume, by A. Kauffmann, accompanied by Cupid and doves, is enclosed in an inlaid ribbon border on the centre panel, the three marqueterie panels of the



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front are divided by stiles, headed by a lion's mask and honeysuckle pendant. The brass mountings and feet are in the style of Louis XVI.

Fig. 162 is another of these important and decorative pieces of furniture with paintings by Angelica Kauffmann, and the elaborate metal mountings introduced into this country by Adam and Chippendale. Its shape is boldly serpentine, intersected by four flat pilasters. The front panel is of *parqueterie* in the French taste, framed in metal and sycamore, centring in a pastoral scene of nymphs making offerings to a statue of Pan. The frieze is of the same wood, closely festooned with flowers and *pateræ* in metal, and the pilasters are panelled in satin- and rose-wood, headed by large *acanthus pateræ* and classical trusses in metal, the side panels being inlaid with vases of flowers on a satin-wood veneer. The top (fig. 163) shows the bold curves of the commode, and is painted with twelve medallions of female figures on a delicate blue ground, representing the signs of the Zodiac, surrounded by sycamore veneer. Concentric borders of West India satin-wood and sycamore, cut to resemble peacock's feathers, complete the semi-circle.

The metal-work has not the finish of the Harewood furniture, but the different veneers are admirably laid, and the general appearance of the piece suggests the work of Seddon.

Angelica Kauffmann, born in 1741, studied in Italy till she came to England in 1765, where she was received with great distinction, being created one of the original thirty-six members of the Royal Academy. She contributed eighty-two pictures to this institution between the years 1769 and 1797, and was largely employed by Adam and others for the painting of medallions and panels for ceilings, walls, and furniture, until she married and returned to Italy. Very good specimens of her work can be seen on the ceiling of the entrance hall to Burlington House. They are graceful in composition, rich in colour, and are the best things of the kind produced by a woman in this country.

In the well-made commode (fig. 164) of about 1785, the shape is

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semi-circular, supported on sideboard taper legs; the cupboard doors run through the frieze, which is of rose-wood, painted with a festooning of tasselled pink drapery, and the four circles, which look as if originally intended for paintings, and by an afterthought filled with amboyna, are bordered with rosewood and framed in a fine mottled satin-wood. The top is of the same wood, bordered and painted with a ribbon twist in rose and green.

The shape of the commode (Plate xi.) in some ways resembles the last specimen, but the origin in this instance is probably Irish, for the painting, although effective, wants finish, and the arrangement of the ornament on the legs is disconnected and without order. The colour and design of the piece is, however, most decorative, and possesses that individual distinction and attraction peculiar to the Irish and their work.

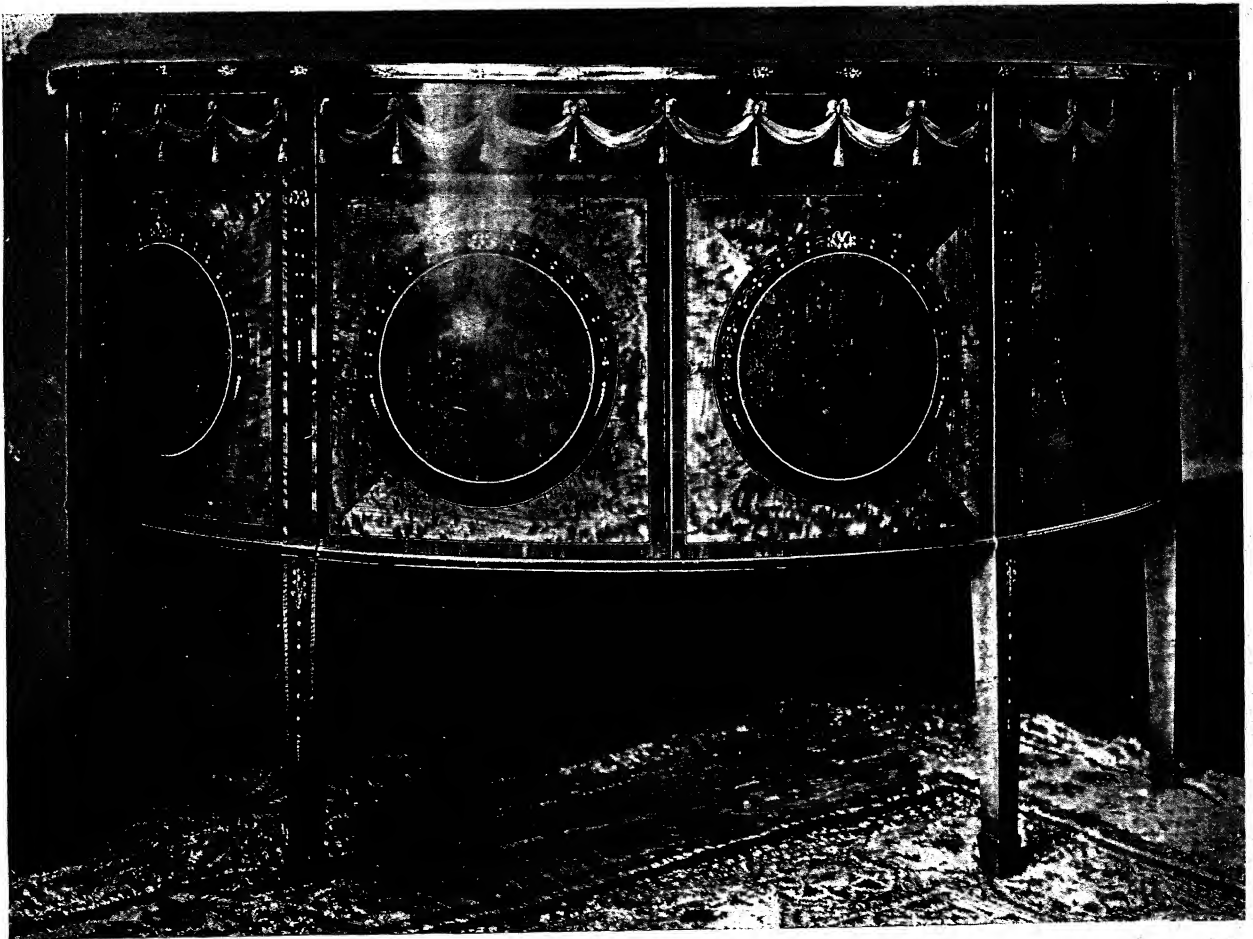


FIG. 164.—SATIN-WOOD INLAID AND PAINTED COMMODOE. Length, 5 feet 6 inches; height, 3 feet; depth, 1 foot 9 inches. Property of COLONEL FEARON TIPPING.

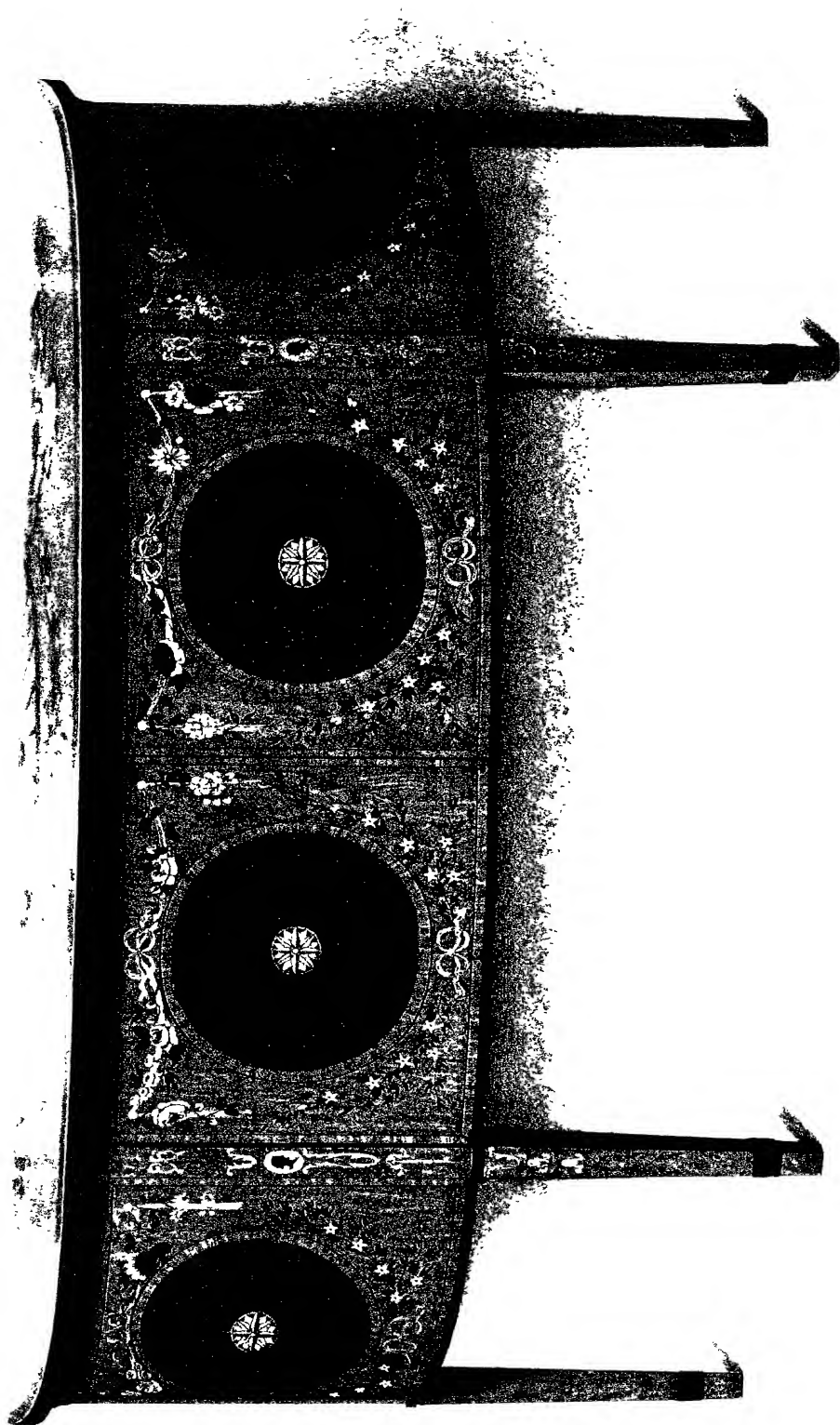
PLATE XI (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

PAINTED SIDEBOARD-COMMODE

HEIGHT	.	.	2 FEET 8 INCHES
LENGTH	.	.	6 " 4 "
DEPTH IN CENTRE,	2	"	

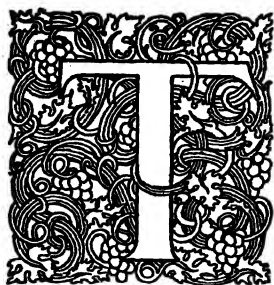
PROPERTY OF  
FRANK PARTRIDGE, Esq.







## CHAPTER V



THIS highly finished satin-wood furniture was accompanied by chairs of lighter design than those immediately succeeding Chippendale. Mahogany, from its practical qualities, remained, and will always remain, the ideal wood for chairs, as the best results can be accomplished in a small space with this material; and to such an extent was its unchangeable quality appreciated that towards the end of the century even window frames were made of this wood; its powers were finally and most conclusively tested in the chairs made by Hepplewhite that accompanied and immediately succeeded those of Adam. The former designer introduced the heart-shaped and oval backs, fitted with slender curved ribs, and reduced their height from 1 foot 10 inches, as given by Chippendale, to an average of 1 foot 8 inches; he also adopted the rapid droop to the arms that was probably originated by Adam. Although perfect in execution, graceful and original in design, the proportions of Hepplewhite's chairs are seldom quite satisfactory, and they suggest the same feeling of disconnection that is observable in his marqueterie.

In fig. 165, an early and transitional example by this maker, there are certain relics of the undulating lines of Chippendale in the frame of the back, which is filled with three splats looped and centred with large pateræ; the seat front serpentine in the manner of Adam, and the fluted legs headed with carved honeysuckle, are an attempt at originality, but quite disproportionate to the upper structure. The nailing and leather seat are not original, but accurate in design. In fig. 166, another simple and early example, the back-rail and uprights are hoop-shaped, and the splat is divided into a double tier of fine ribs that



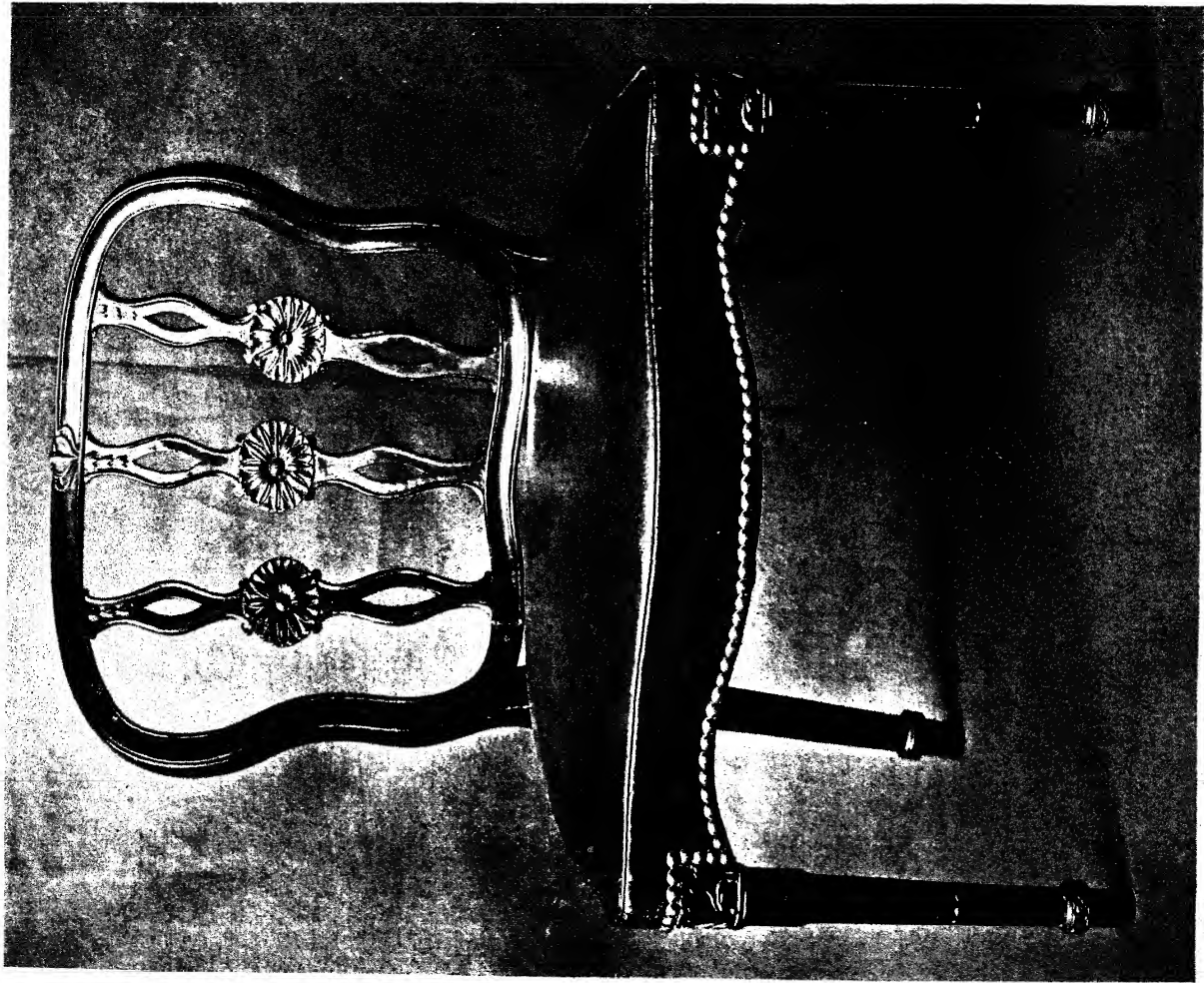


FIG. 165.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.

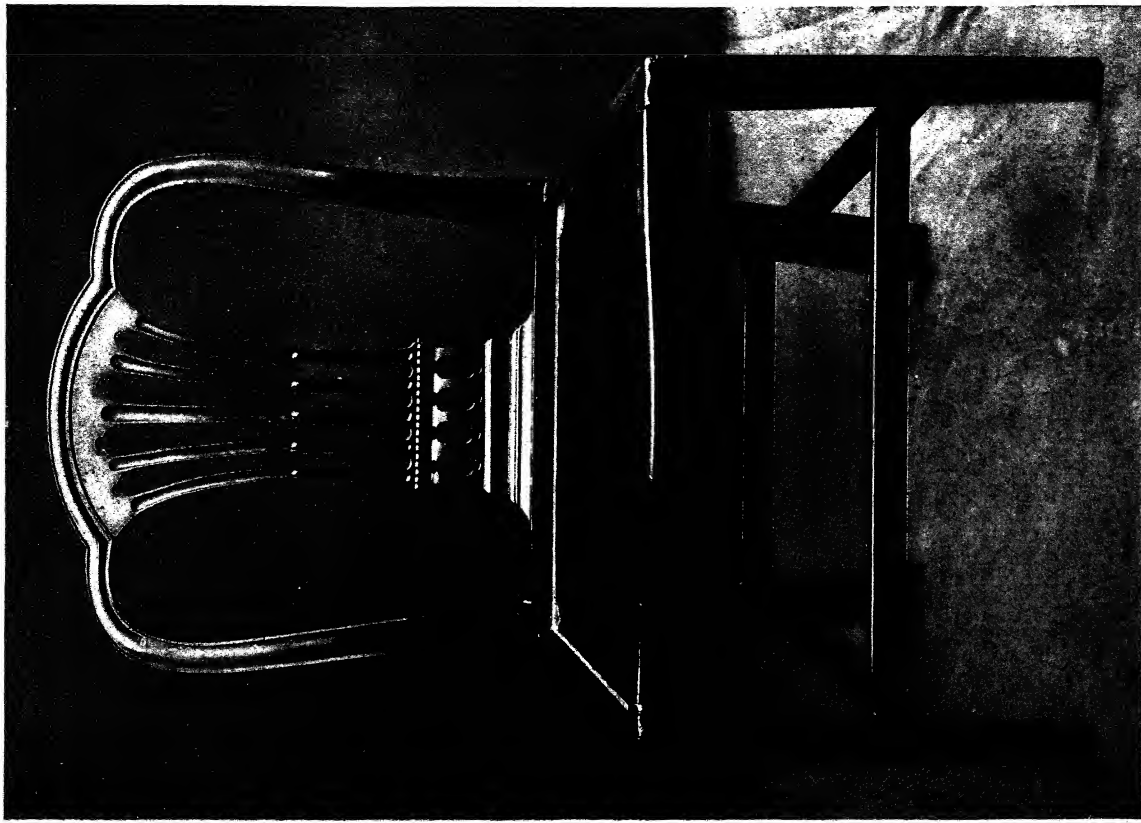


FIG. 166.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of Lord St. Oswald.

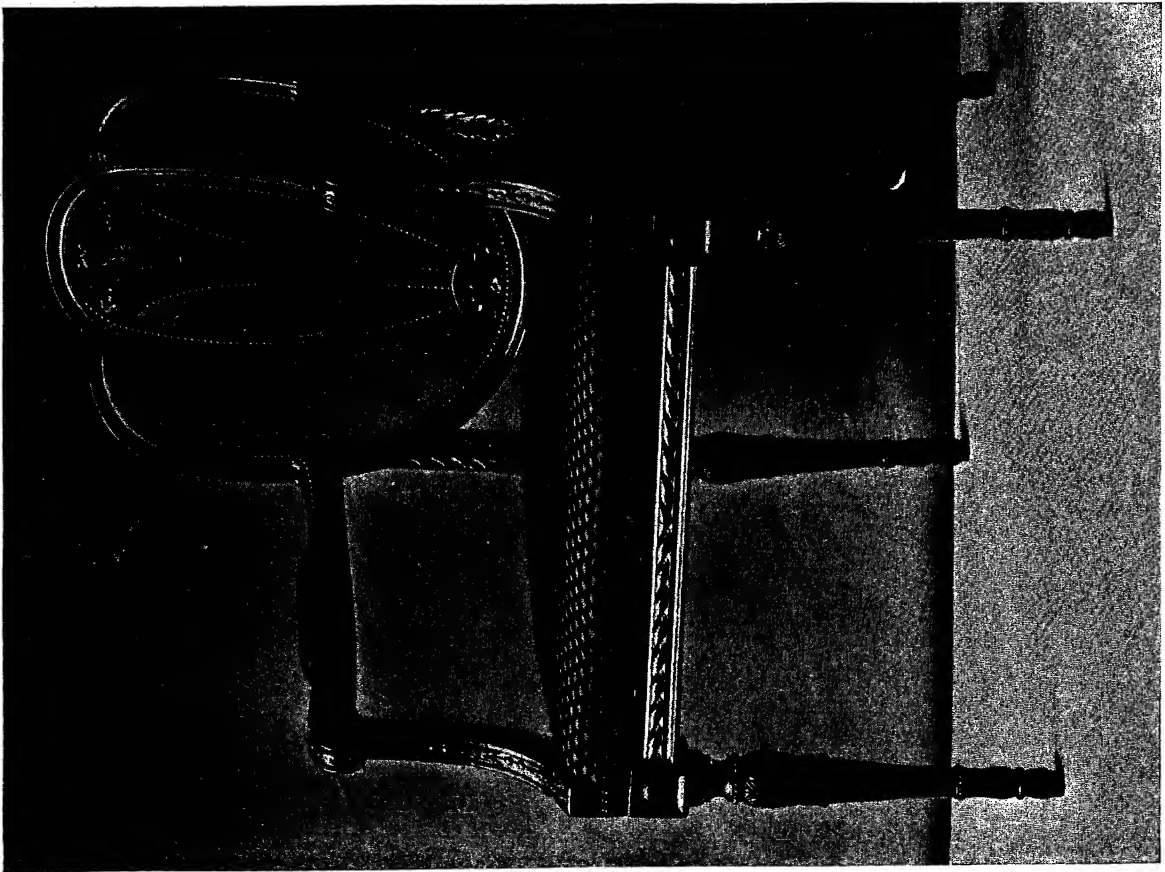


FIG. 167.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.

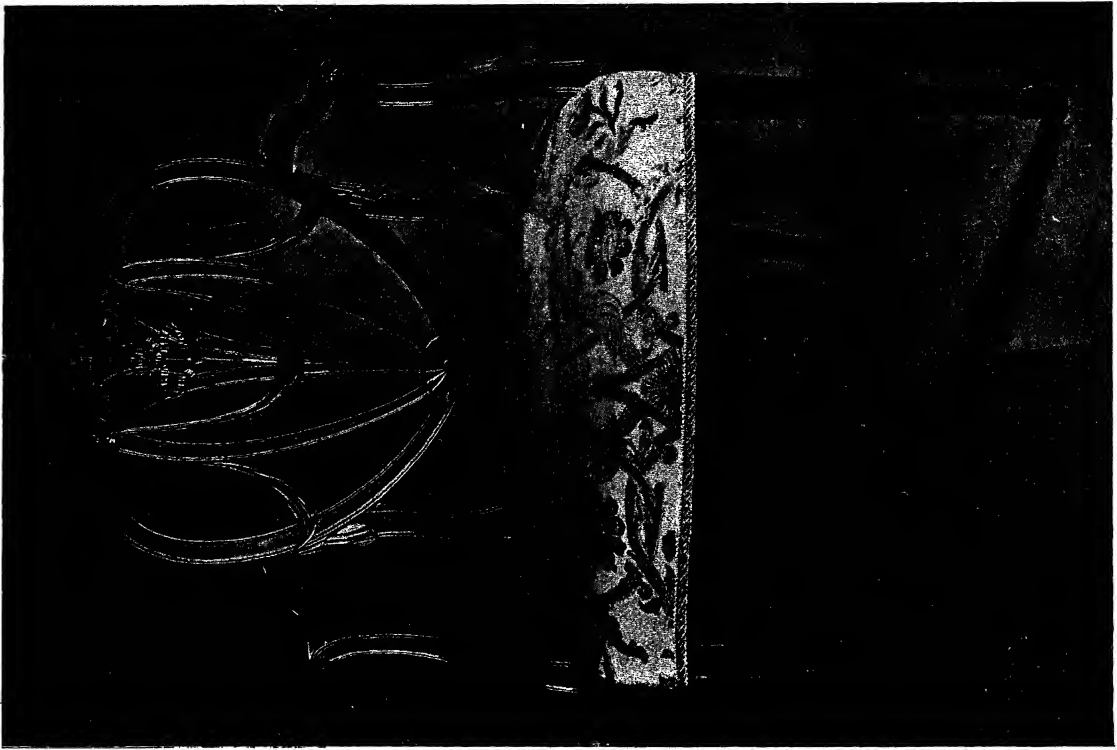


FIG. 168.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of ALFRED DAVIS, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

almost suggests a reversion to the early mahogany chairs such as fig. 109 (Age of Mahogany). The seat is also sunk in a rabbet, a fashion that disappeared after 1770, and the legs are straight and slightly fluted. A great many of these well-made and simple chairs are in existence, for, costing little, they formed the representative type in use amongst the middle classes. Fig. 167 shows another step in the Hepplewhite evolution, where the loopings of the back suggest the heart-shape; the three feathers, so favourite an ornament with this maker, being introduced as a cresting under the central loop. This royal cognisance was probably adopted from chairs made by Hepplewhite for George IV., when Prince of Wales, and obtained great fashion from 1770 to 1780. The beading on the inner side of these loops is most effective and refined; the arms are still straight, and their supports carved; the legs are of the Louis XVI. type introduced by Adam.

In fig. 168 a still further step in lightness is observable. The heart-shape is clearly shown and disconnected from the seat; the three feathers are again introduced in fine carving, and the loopings of the back are connected with slender festoons of drapery. The arms are still high, and undulate most gracefully; the legs are even lighter than in preceding examples, and the general proportion is in this instance perfect. In fig. 169 the heart has become shield-shaped; the loopings are omitted, and the splat is entirely formed of the three feathers carved with solidity and boldness, the rest of the chair remaining plain. The taper legs are connected by stretchers and appear somewhat clumsy in the illustration, but in looking at all photographic representations of chairs it is well to remember that the front legs can never be focussed in exact proportion to the back.

Another interesting back in this series is shown in fig. 170. Here a honeysuckle heading is inserted in boxwood, and pateræ, with short pendants of the same wood, head the arms and shoulders of the shield-shaped back; the ribs of the splat are finely carved and tied horizontally

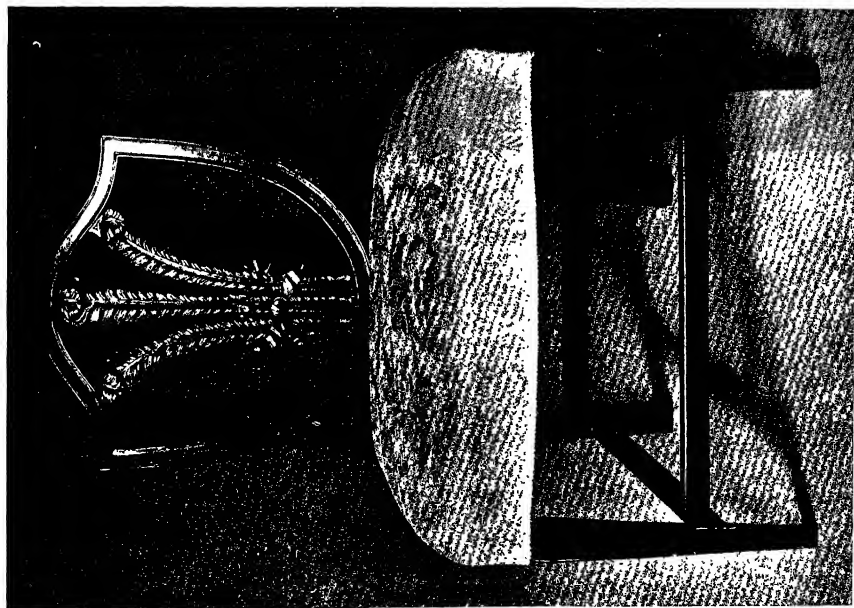


FIG. 169.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of LADY RUSSELL.

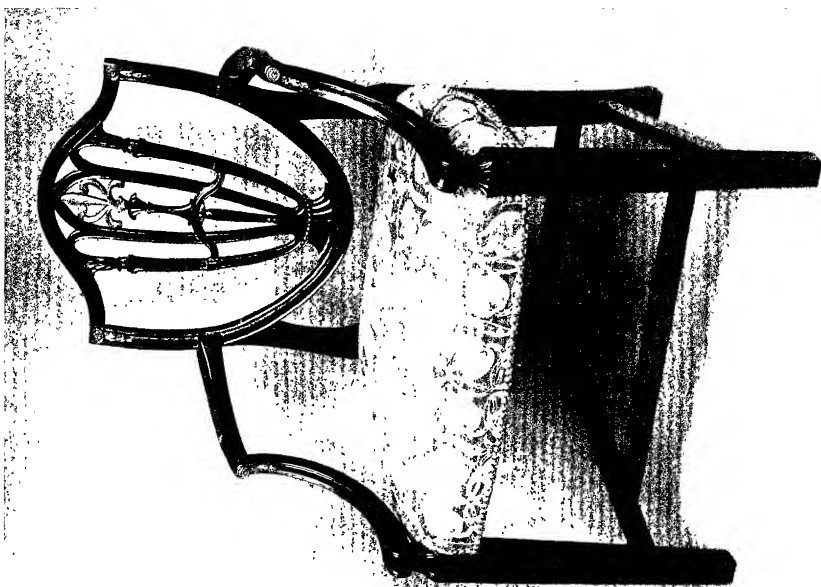


FIG. 170.—MAHOGANY AND BOXWOOD CHAIR.  
Property of MESSRS. WARING.

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by a bow-shaped attachment. The legs and stretchers appear coarse in the illustration, but these have again been exaggerated by photography. The shield, arms, and seat-rail in fig. 171 are guilloched in fine carving; the ribs of the back follow the shape of the shield, swelling with a slight entasis and finishing in acanthus cappings; the legs are exceedingly pure in style, and are headed with finely cut pateræ. This is a chair of great finish, and, if designed by Hepplewhite, unusually perfect in all its proportions, and so good are these that the design is more suggestive of Adam than this maker.

The introduction of wheat-ears into the carving was another favourite pattern. In fig. 172 these head the outer ribs of the splat; the curves of the shield, the looping of the centre rib, and the leafage, carved in low relief as a cresting, are Irish in treatment. The shield resting on the seat, and the straight legs, show that the date is early, being soon after 1770.

In fig. 173 the point of the shield is sharp, resting upon the seat, the ribs are entirely formed of wheat-ears, their blades being rippled, so that a plaited effect is produced. Sets of these chairs are by no means common, but the pattern is most effective, its simplicity and good taste are more in accordance with the designs of Chippendale and Haig. That this partnership existed in 1772 is proved by the heading of the Harewood bills of that date. The statement therefore that Haig entered the firm on the death of Thomas Chippendale in 1779 is incorrect. Haig left the firm in 1796, which was continued by Chippen-  
dale's son until 1821.

Fig. 174 is a well-known and effective design of Hepplewhite, in which the feather motive is represented by palm-leaves and forms the centre of the splat; this is surrounded by an oval rib, strengthened on either side by additional leaves. The seat and legs are in neat proportion, showing the reduction in size that had taken place in arm-chairs.

In fig. 175, the beginning of the end is evident, and hence-



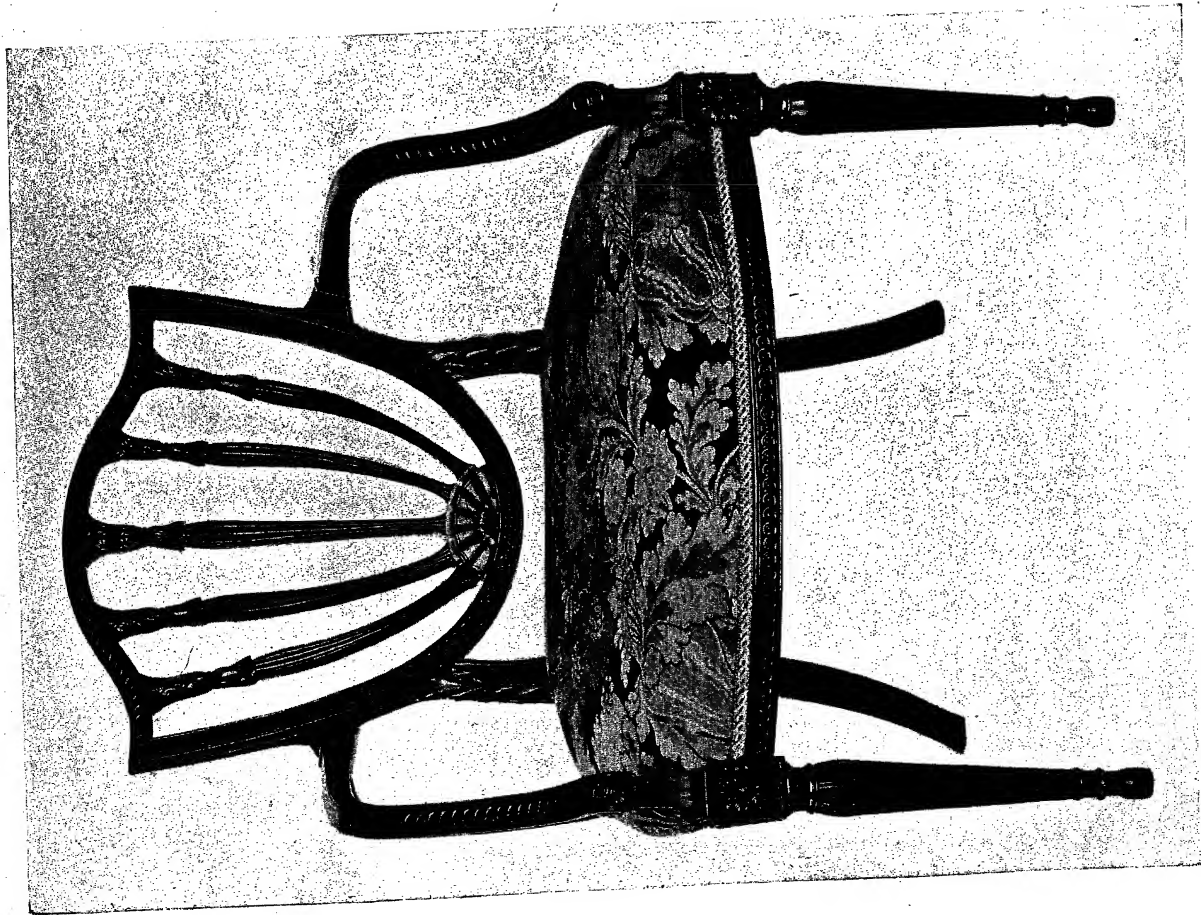


FIG. 171.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of F. Snook, Esq.

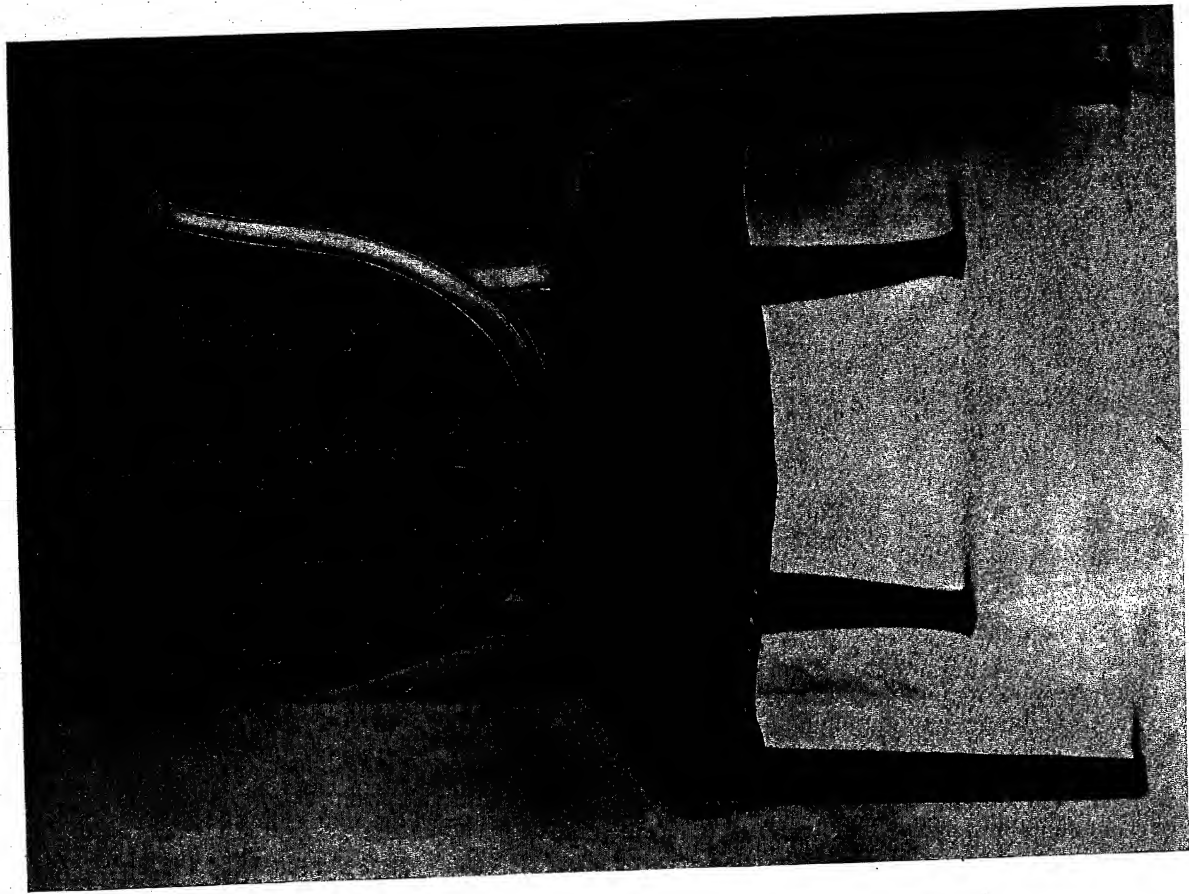


FIG. 172.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.

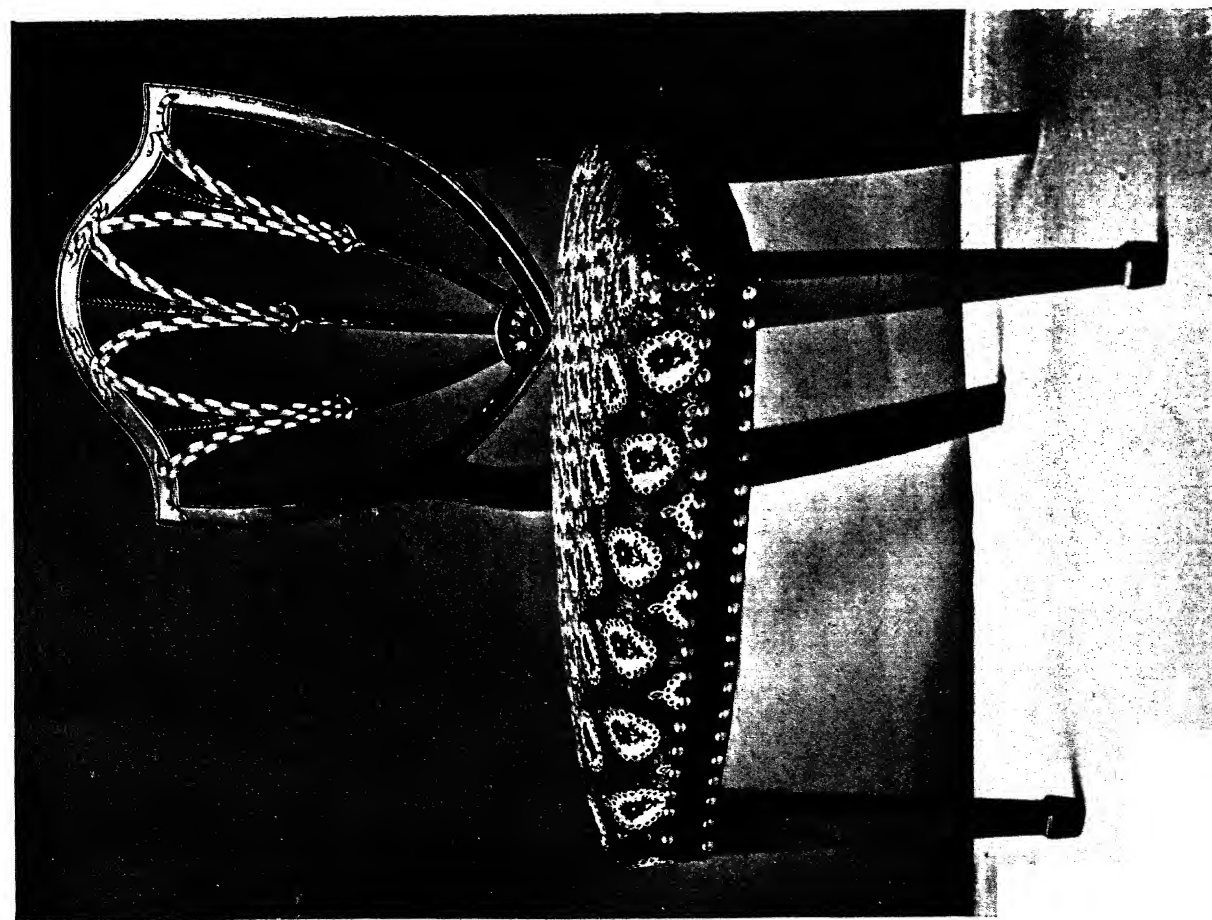


FIG. 173.—MAHOOGANY CHAIR.

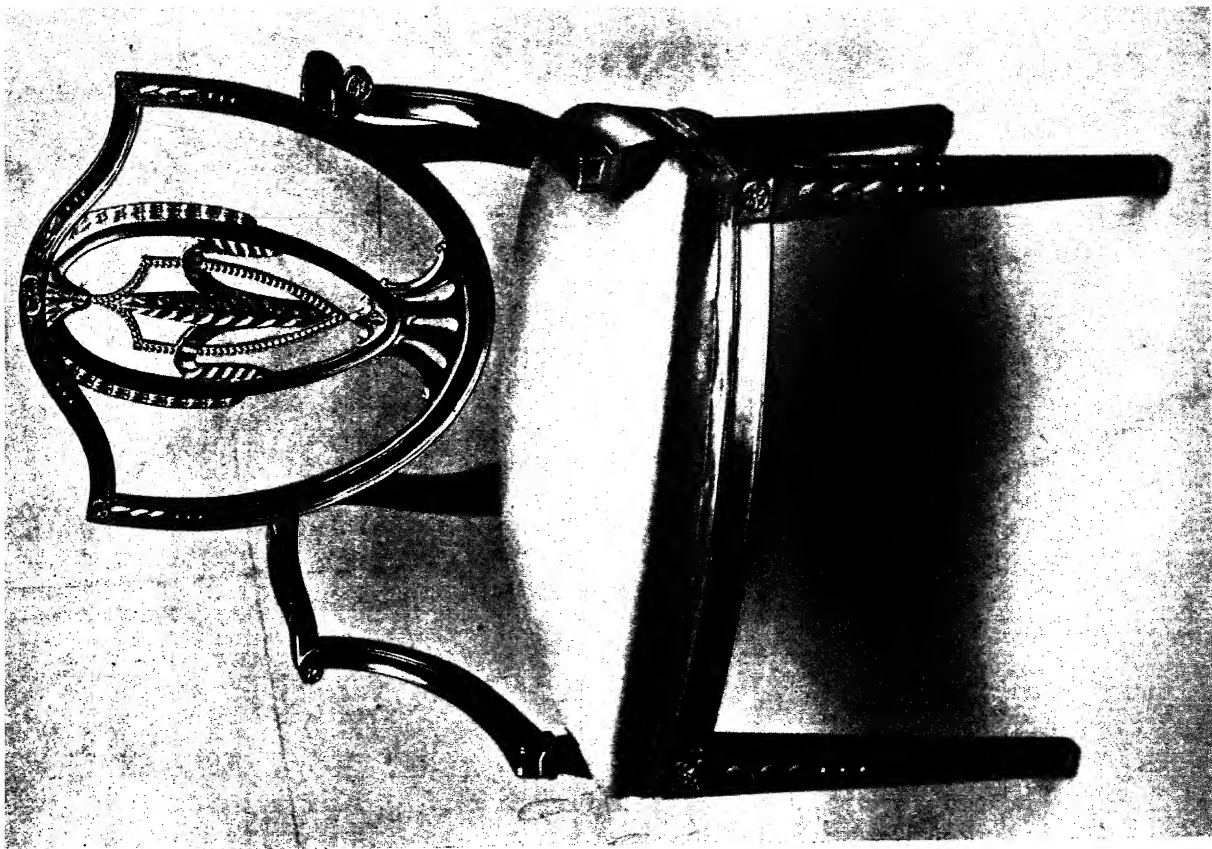


FIG. 174.—MAHOOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of Messrs. Waring.



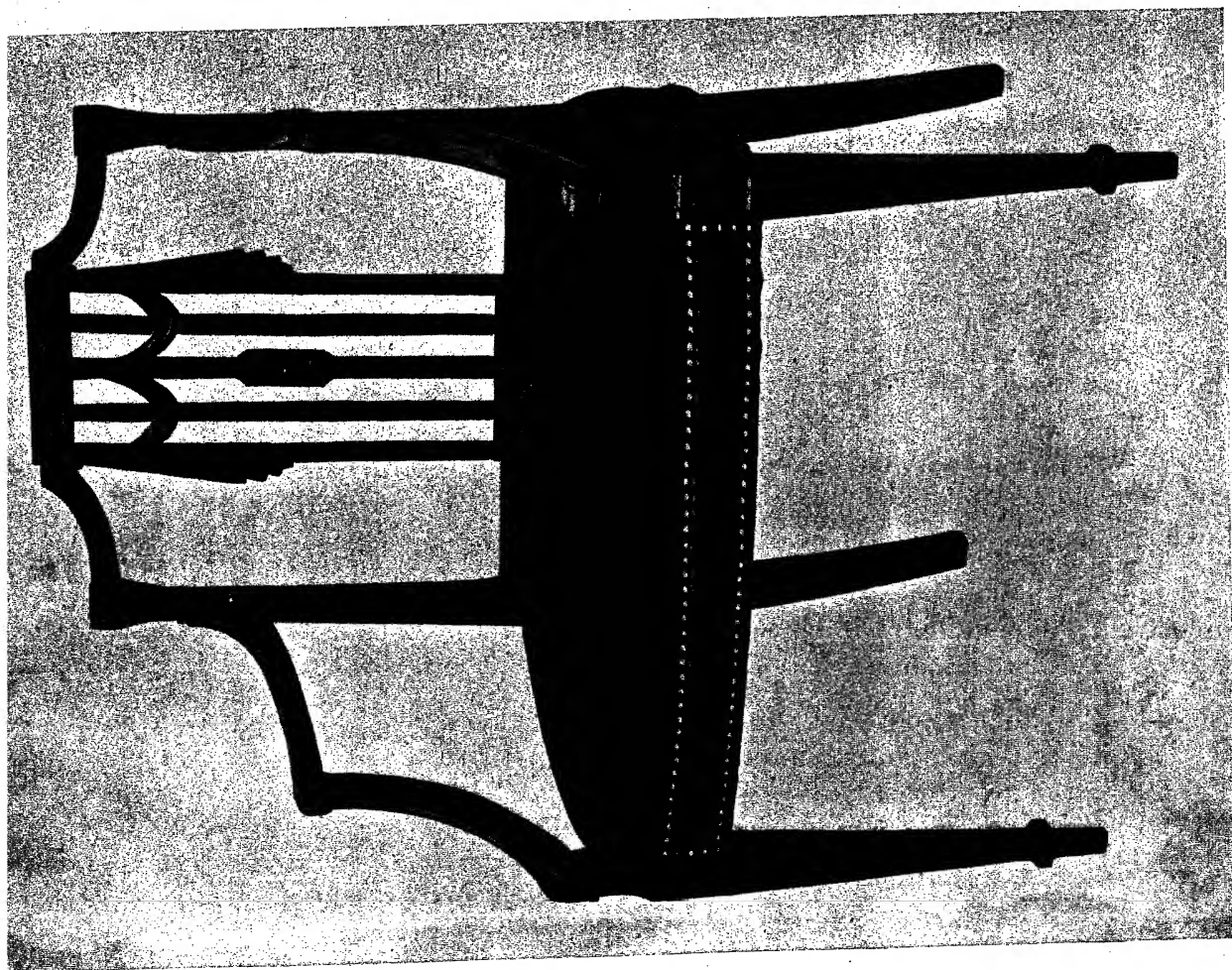


FIG. 175.—MAHOAGANY CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet; width, 1 foot 10 inches.

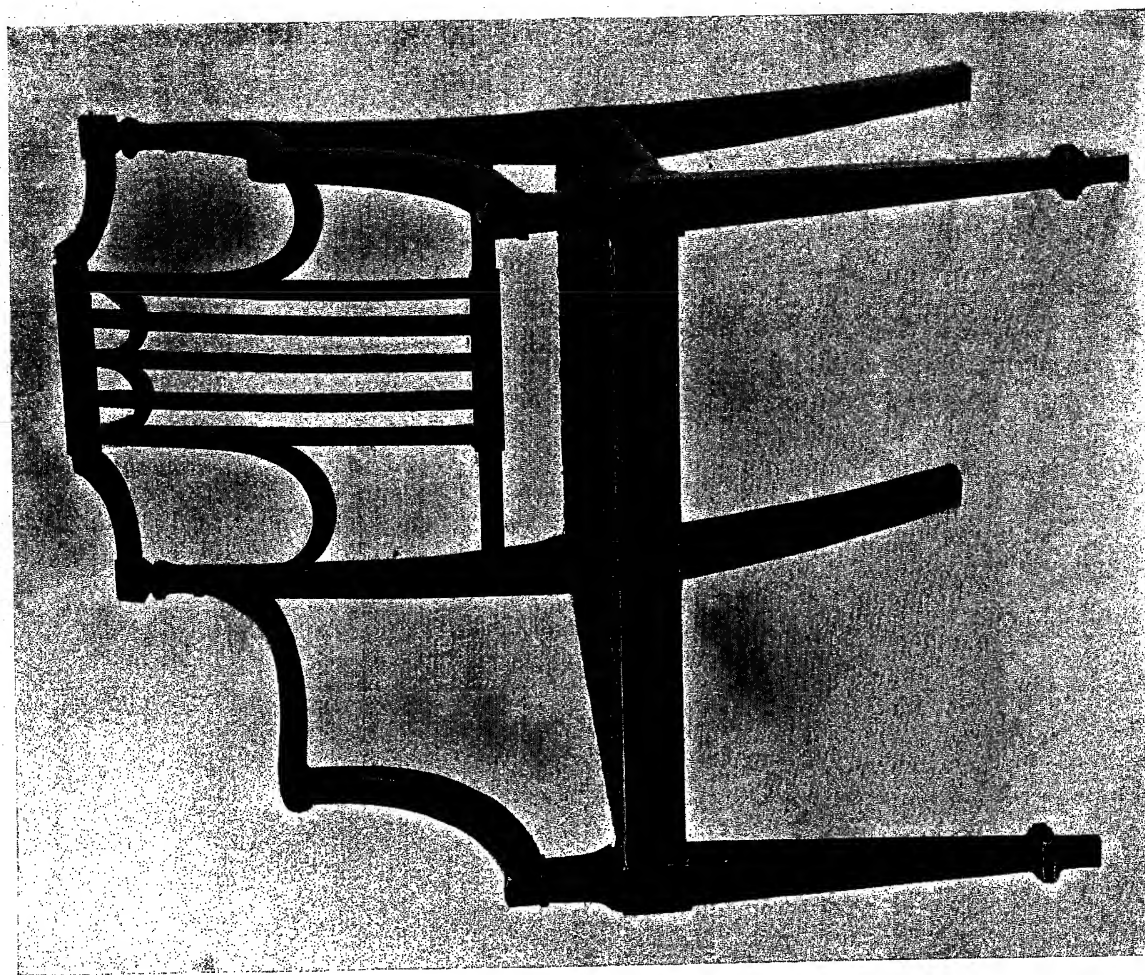


FIG. 176.—PAINTED MAHOAGANY CHAIR.  
Property of Mrs. FLEMING.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

forward design in the backs of chairs was sacrificed to delicacy and eccentricity of line ; real originality disappeared, and in the strengthless curves and fineness of the perpendicular ribs that take the form of slender columns, all sentiment of movement was lost ; at times narrow festoons of drapery or wire-like sprays of acanthus are introduced, but the pattern of the splat is almost geometrical, and carving is often entirely omitted in favour of painted floral decoration, or japanning as it was then called ; in the latter style, such as fig. 176, the surface was entirely painted green,



FIG. 177.—UPHOLSTERED TUB-CHAIR.  
Height, 3 feet 6 inches ; width at ears, 2 feet 6 inches.

PLATE III (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

PAINTED SATINWOOD WRITING-CABINET

HEIGHT, 7 FEET 11 INCHES

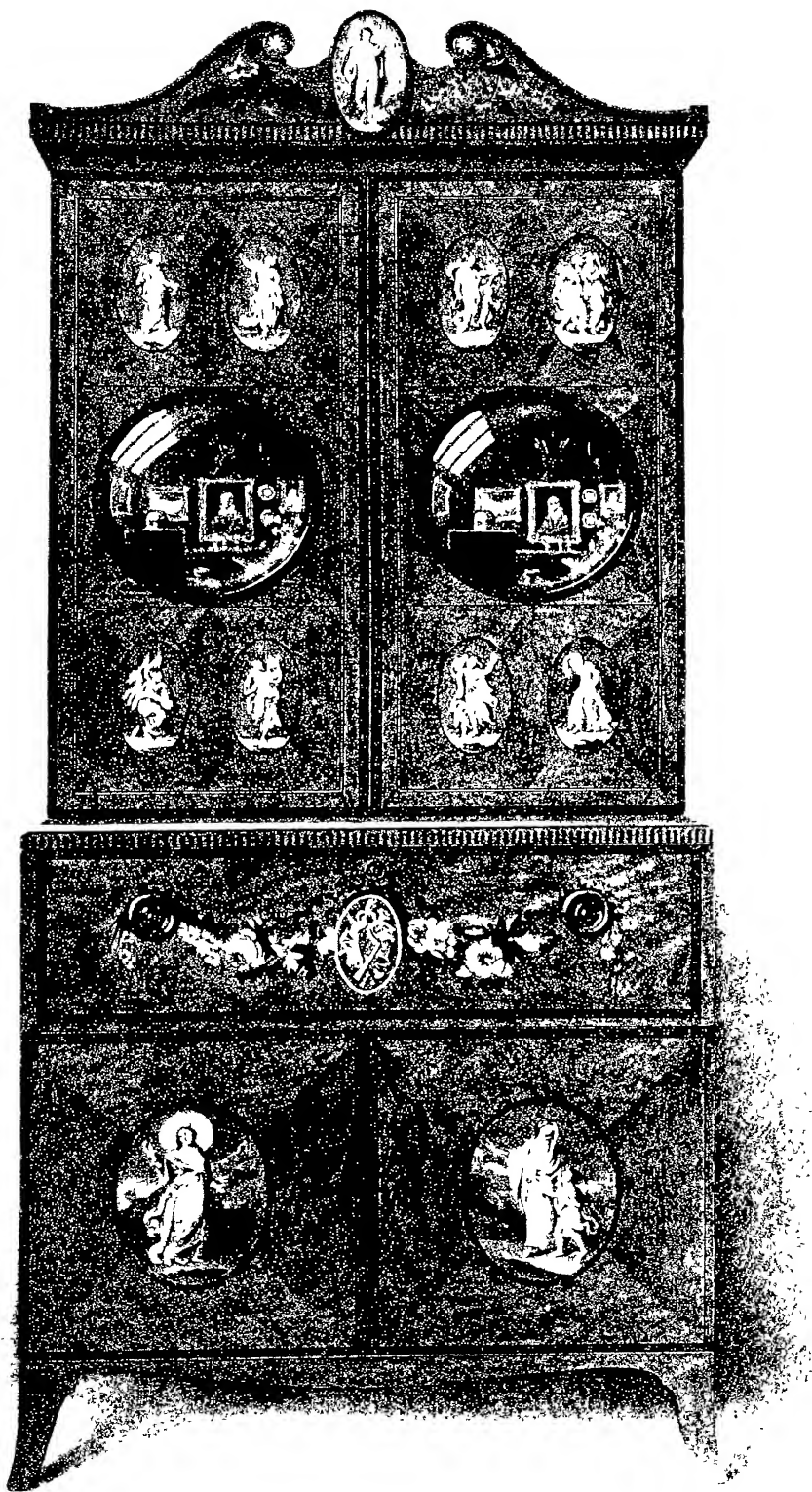
DEPTH, 1 FOOT 10 "

WIDTH, 3 FEET 6 "

PROPERTY OF

MESSRS. D. L. ISAACS







# ENGLISH FURNITURE

blue, black, buff, or brown, and a painted design in colours was added. The seats often were caned to receive a loose squab in place of the usual stuffing, and in many instances chairs give the impression that they would break to pieces if sat upon, but in spite of this fragile appearance, the construction was so admirable, the wood so well chosen, that they have remained perfectly sound and practical. It would be difficult to say whether these two last examples are of the school of Hepplewhite or Sheraton. In *The Cabinet-maker's Book of Prices*, published 1788, there is so much resemblance in the designs of Hepplewhite and Shearer to those of Sheraton, who published *The Cabinet-maker's and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book* in 1791-94, that the last-named designer must have been very greatly influenced by the drawings of the earlier London makers.

The grandfather or so-called tub-chairs of Hepplewhite and his contemporaries, such as fig. 177, resembled in height those of the previous thirty years, but the backs and sides formed a complete half-circle, the arms running within the sides; the legs are always extremely simple during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Before leaving this section of chairs made between 1770 and 1788, it may be interesting to give an eccentric example of looping. Figs. 178 are made in beech, painted black, and of about the date 1768, for the dipped seat was introduced about that time. These are more ingenious than beautiful.

It is almost superfluous to say that varieties of the foregoing examples are almost numberless, for chairs of Hepplewhite and his followers exceed in number those of any other school; consequently it is only possible to select a few individual specimens that show evolution of style. It is also unnecessary to give more than one illustration of the chair-backed settees that accompanied this type, for they exactly resembled the chairs, varying in the number of their backs according to their length. Fig. 179 is five-backed and of the wheat-ear pattern already described, the backs at either end curve to meet the arms, which have a bold downward sweep. The back legs are confined to the ends.



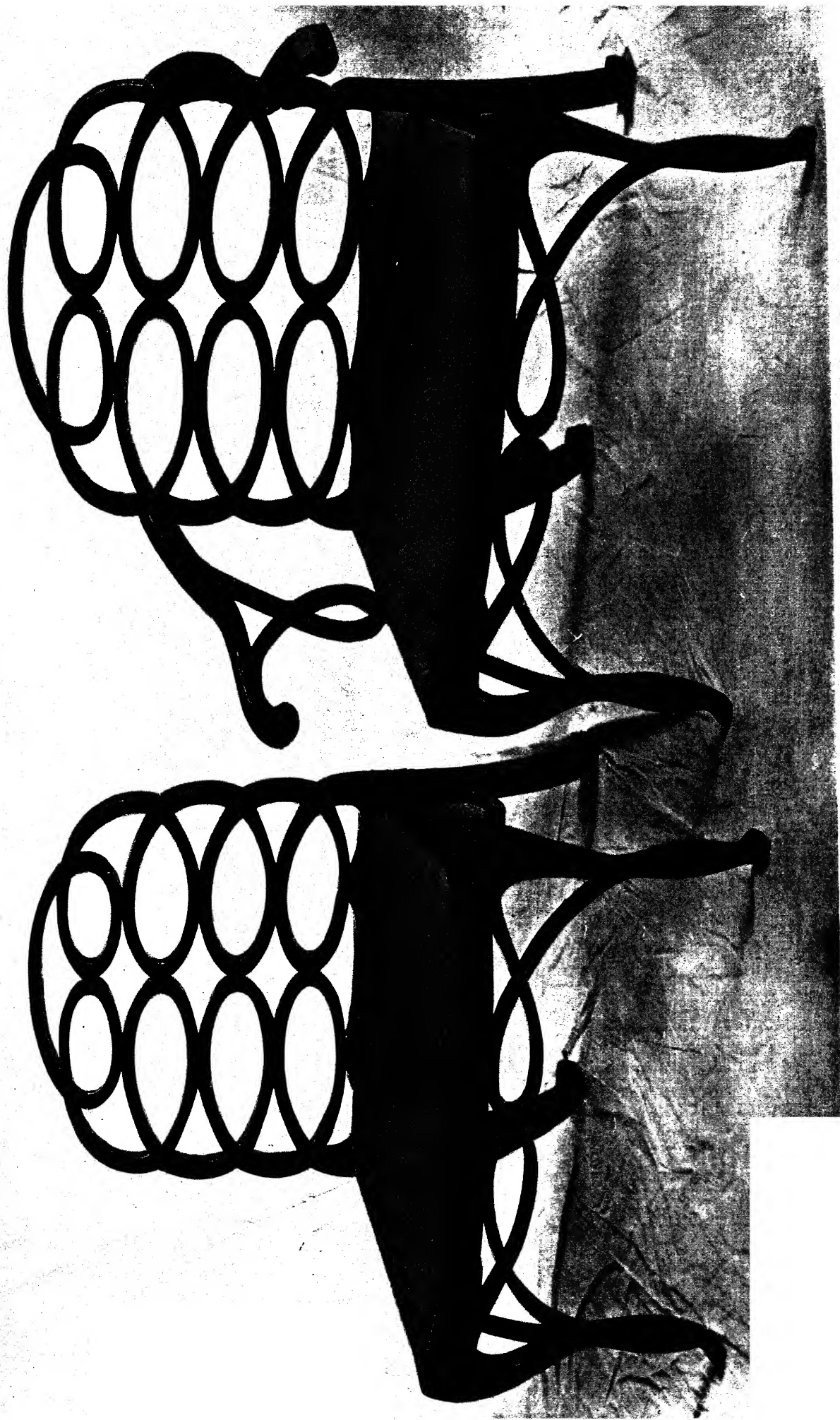


FIG. 178.—PAINTED BEECHWOOD CHAIRS. Property of FRANK GREEN, Esq.

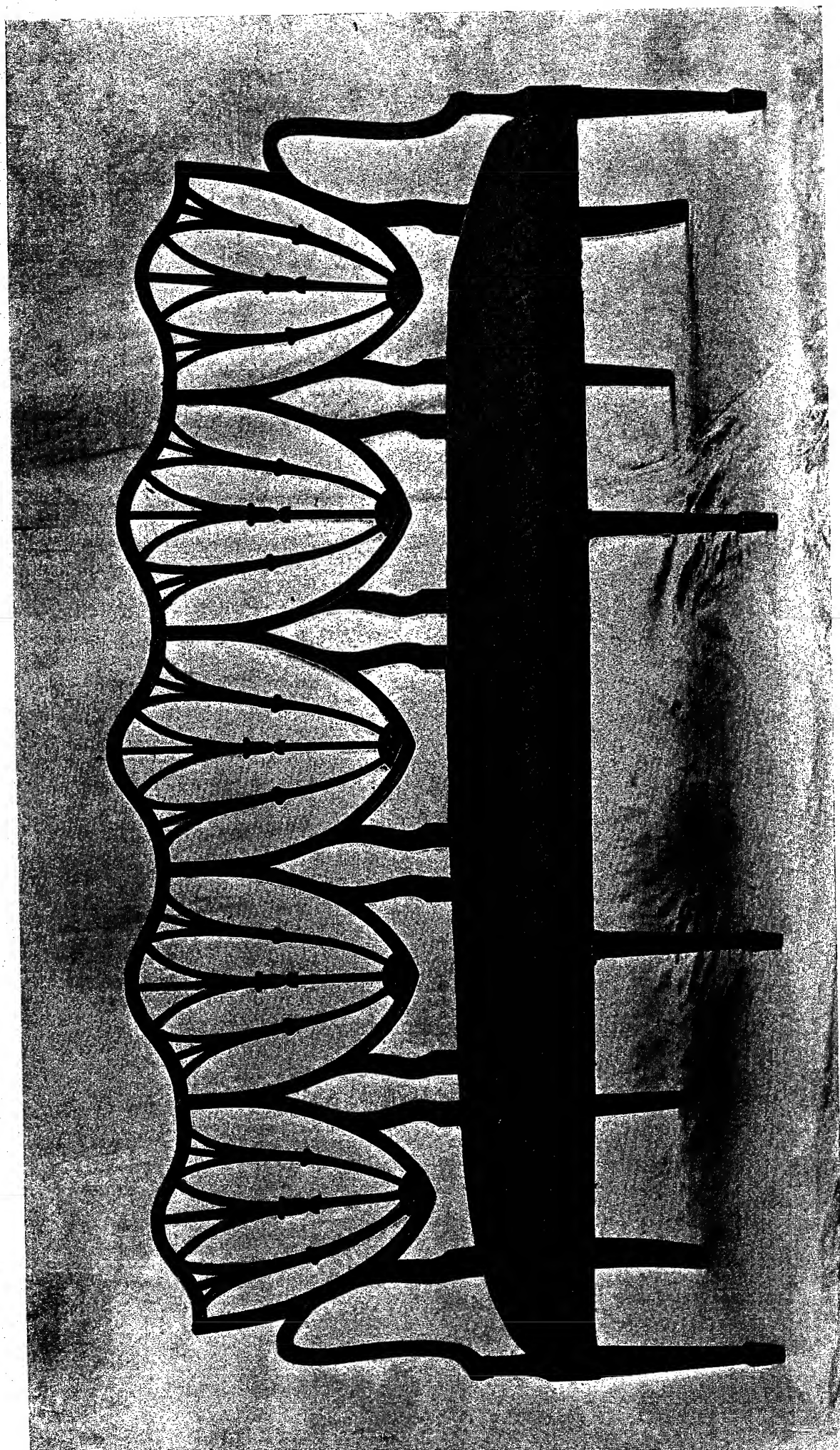


FIG. 179.—MAHOGANY CHAIR-BACK SETTEE. Length, 7 feet.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.

## CHAPTER VI



F chairs during the last quarter of the eighteenth century were not very decorative and sometimes monotonous, cabinets and book-cases gave great opportunities for the display of inlay and painting on satin-wood. In Plate XII., a writing-cabinet of about 1780, the construction and decoration are uncommon. The upper cupboard is surmounted by a shallow pediment, painted in grisaille on a turquoise ground, with imitations of the jasper Wedgwood plaques so often inserted on furniture, and in the centre of each door is inserted a mirror; the lower portion is composed of a writing-drawer, painted with a festoon of flowers, and a cupboard decorated to match the upper panels. The choice of subjects in these plaques is rather incongruous; the lower paintings representing Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane and Hagar and Ishmael, whilst those of the upper portion are devoted to dancing and other classical pursuits; the satin-wood veneer is parqueted and bordered with tulip-wood.

Fig. 180 is a fine and simple book-case of the school of Hepplewhite. The motive is a double column framing each door, the upper order of the caps being Corinthian and the lower Ionic; the carving is limited to these and the headings of the glass framings; the lower doors are netted with copper wire backed by plaited silk, an opportunity for introducing colour that was greatly appreciated during the last quarter of the century.

Book-cases and china-cupboards of all dimensions were veneered with satin-wood, but the larger specimens are rare, not only on account of the cost of material, but clearly such a mass of brilliant yellow, with the surrounding furniture of the same, would have been too much in a room.

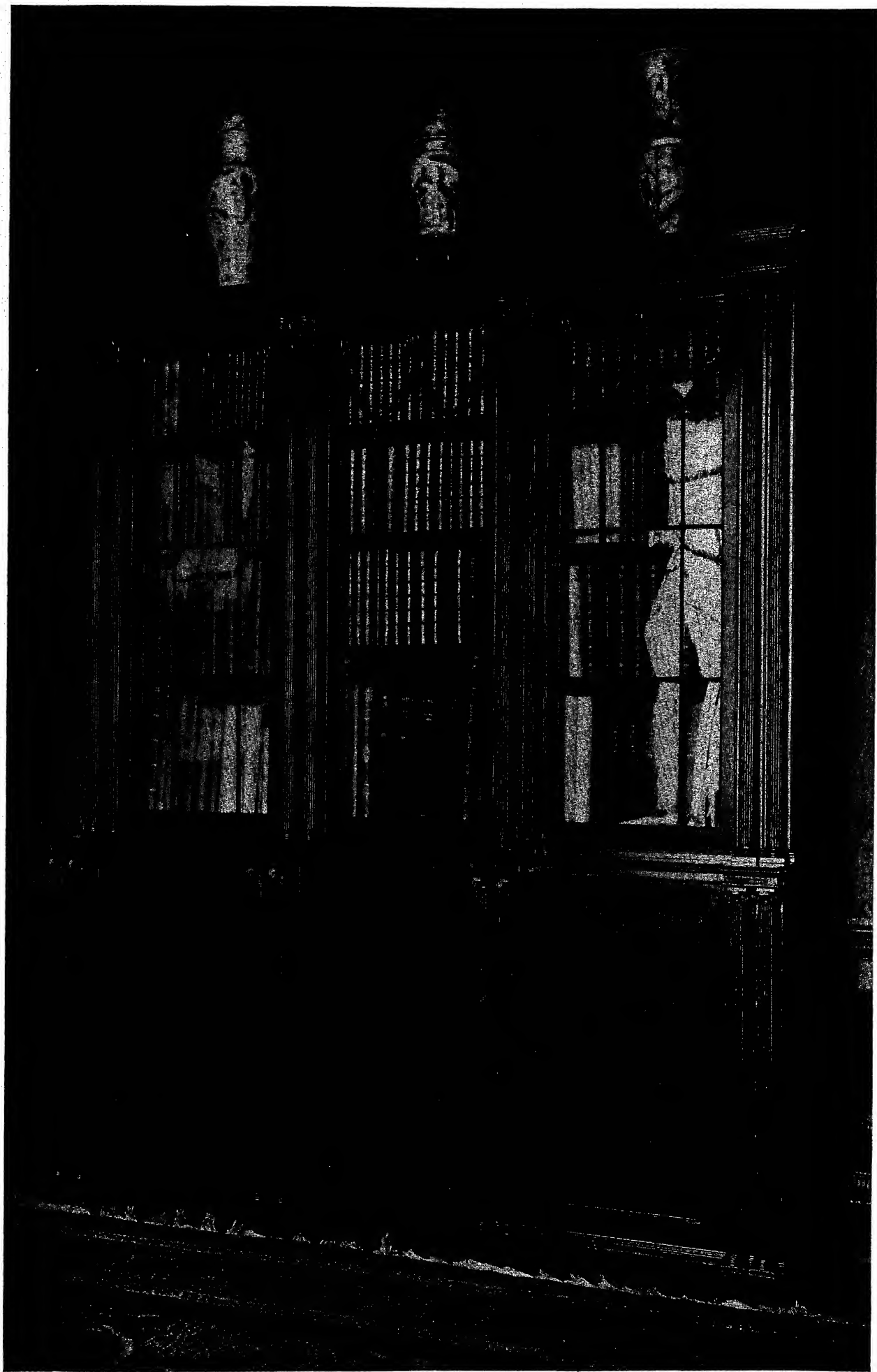


FIG. 180.—MAHOGANY BOOK-CASE. Property of W. RAPHAEL, Esq.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Fig. 181, of unusual size, was made for Queen Charlotte about 1780. It is surmounted by a swan-necked pediment and fluted frieze with mahogany mouldings, which give great relief and strength to the upper portion, which consists of a book-case of four glazed compartments, panelled in squares and octagons, for great variety was aimed at in the arrangement of this glazing. The lower portion is composed of two cupboards, veneered with satin-wood and mouldings of mahogany, with drawers to match, containing an escritoire. The accurate proportions of this piece, and its former possession by royalty, would infer that it was made by the royal cabinet-makers, Chippendale the younger and Haig, who were then in partnership. Fig. 182 is a china-cupboard or book-case, a few years later in date, made of solid satin-wood, and probably by Hepplewhite. Here the pediment is depressed into two shallow scrolls, mounted with three small urns of the same wood. The upper portion is composed of a glazed cupboard, flanked by two narrow compartments with panelled doors banded in mahogany, a half patera being carved at their bases in the solid wood. The drawers in the lower portion are banded with mahogany, those at the top opening as an escritoire.

It should be noticed that at this time the structure of these pieces of furniture became more narrow, and that the lower part is higher in proportion to the upper, than in previous years. This feature is very characteristic of Sheraton, who arrived in London from Stockton-on-Tees in 1790, and published his first edition of *The Cabinet-maker's and Upholsterer's Drawing-Book* in 1791. Although expert and experienced as a cabinet-maker, he does not appear to have carried on this technical side of the work personally, for shortly after his arrival in London, he devoted himself to writing books of design for furniture and discourses on religion, differing from other cabinet-makers in becoming a designer more than an executant. It is extremely doubtful if Sheraton had at any time in London a well-established business for the manufacture of the furniture associated with his name, but probably he obtained a great many

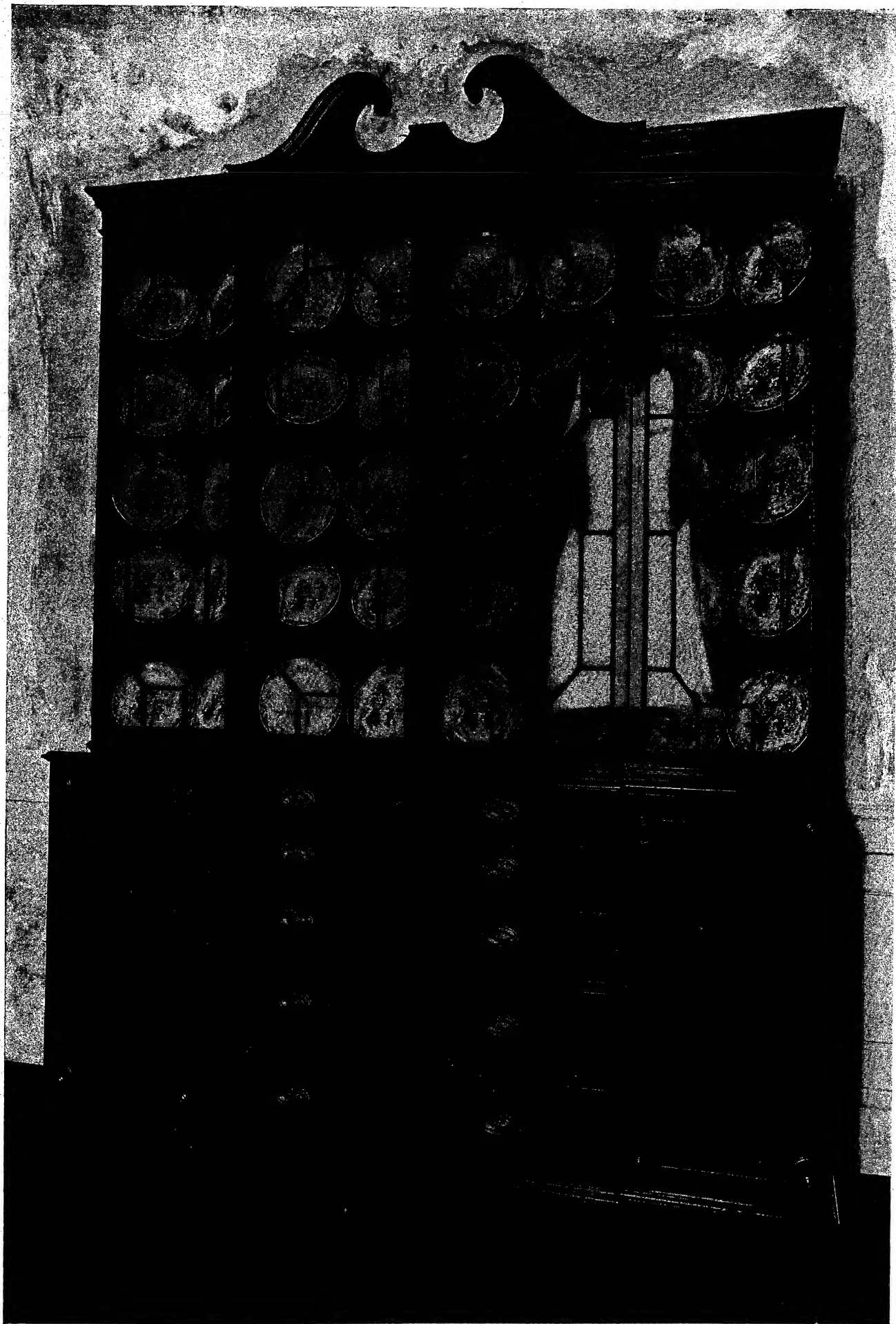


FIG. 181.—SATIN-WOOD BOOK-CASE. Length, 8 feet; height, 7 feet 9 inches.  
Property of MESSRS. J. MALLETT AND SON.

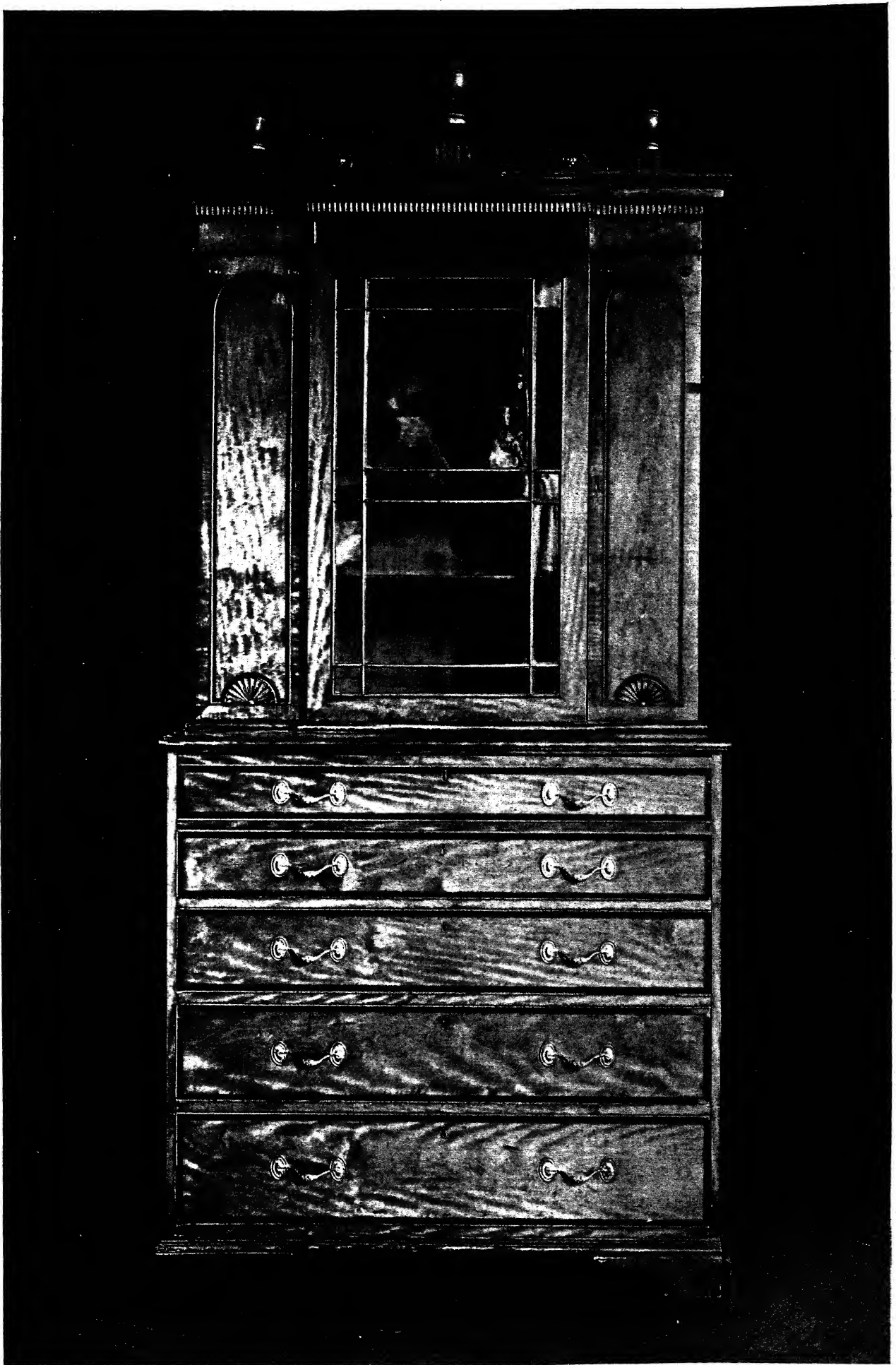


FIG. 182.—SATIN-WOOD CABINET AND ESCRITOIRE. Length, 3 feet 6 inches; height, 7 feet 2 inches. Property of MESSRS. GILL AND REIGATE.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

orders from his designs, employing other cabinet-makers to carry them out. In 1802-3 he published *The Cabinet Dictionary, containing An Explanation of all the Terms used in the Cabinet Chair and Upholstery branches, containing a display of useful pieces of furniture*, and died the following year while preparing a work in 125 numbers called *The Cabinet-maker, Upholsterer, and General Artist's Encyclopedia*. Sheraton's work was always delicate, the motives slender, vertical lines and long sweeping curves being characteristic of his taste. He advocated the use of solid satin-wood in chairs, and was thereby enabled to introduce a little delicate carving in conjunction with inlay and painted decoration.

In fig. 183 can be seen the usual type of book-case connected with Sheraton's early designs, bearing the serpentine pediment, dentalled cornice, and little vases that so frequently appear as finials on this kind of furniture. The writing part is faced by one deep drawer with cupboards beneath. A very great many book-cases of this exact type were made in mahogany, and occasionally in satin-wood. Some of those which now follow are more unusual in character, and consequently a little more interesting.

Fig. 184 is a satin-wood book-case, made under Sheraton's influence, the form of the cornice is peculiar to his taste

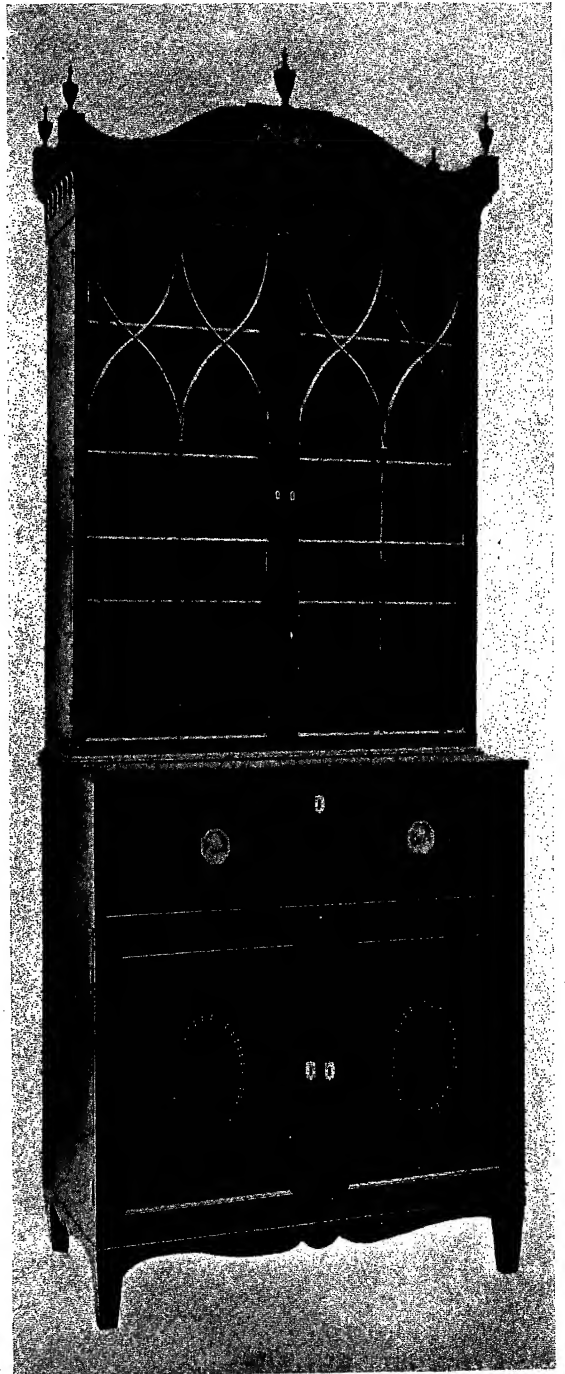


FIG. 183.—INLAID MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE BOOK-CASE. Height, 7 feet 6 inches ; width, 3 feet 6 inches. Property of ROBERT EASTWOOD, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

and the last ten years of the eighteenth century. The framings of the glass take the form of classical urns on bases, a fashion much affected in these glazings. The doors are headed by a painted frieze of flowers, repeated round the drawer facing the *escritoire*. Almost all these book-cases or chests of drawers contained an *escritoire* drawer, the flaps to bureau book-cases being out of fashion. The design for fig. 185 is published in Sheraton's *Cabinet-maker*, and is most distinctive of his style; there is already a touch of Empire in the almost meretricious combination of palm branches and the festooned curtain forming the pediment, whilst all sense of order is lost in the treatment of the pilasters framing the doors, but much grace exists in the ovals and long sweeping curves of the glazing; the veneer is a mixture of the most carefully selected satin, mahogany, and zebra-woods, and feet are discarded in favour of a plain plinth.

The design of the writing-drawer book-case in satin-wood (fig. 186) comes from the same source. The dentalled cornice finishing in sharp points on these two specimens was a particularly favourite feature of this master, and the broad bandings of inlay that have already been alluded to as identified with his work, are very noticeable in this graceful piece. The distribution of cupboards and drawers is a very distinct departure from any previous cabinet-maker's work, a sense of narrowness and elegance being preserved throughout. This is even more evident in the rare little Sheraton cabinet (fig. 187), where the distribution of spacing to the drawers and cupboards is quite fresh, but the projection of the corners in columns, so characteristic of Sheraton, is not his invention, for occasional examples are found of this in Chippendale's work about 1765. The surface of this highly finished piece is principally satin-wood, the heads and bases of the colonnettes being carved in this material; but the panels are veneered with the rare figured mahogany of the kind found on the clothes-press (Plate x.), and the combination of the two woods is brilliant and beautiful. This carefully finished piece of furniture was originally one of a set of three pieces, the largest being headed by a clock, the other

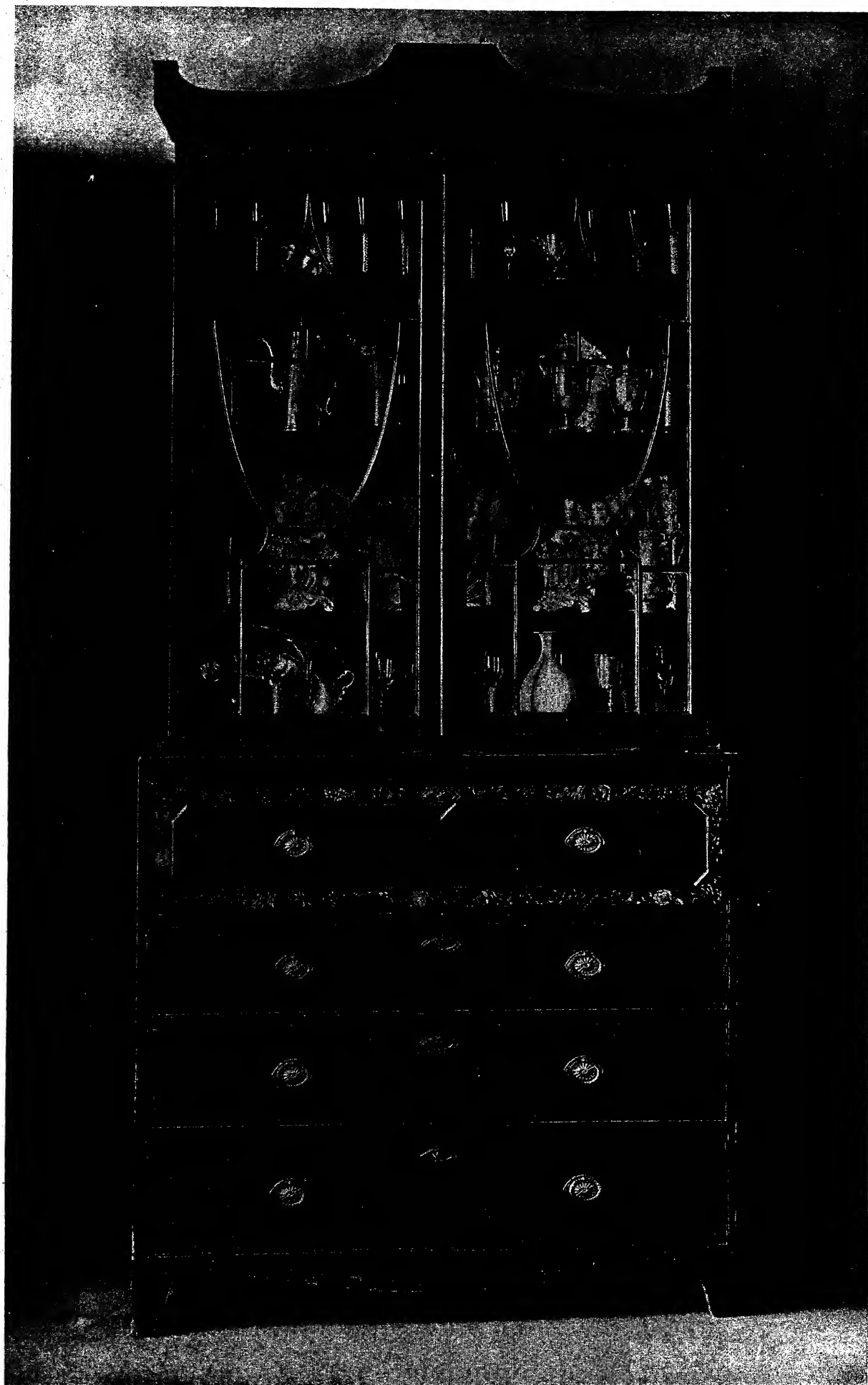


FIG. 184.—PAINTED SATIN-WOOD ESCRITOIRE BOOK-CASE. Height, 8 feet 8 inches ; length, 3 feet 9 inches ; depth, 1 foot 9 inches. Property of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.



FIG. 185.—MAHOGANY AND SATIN-WOOD BOOK-CASE. Property of F. C. HUNTER, Esq.

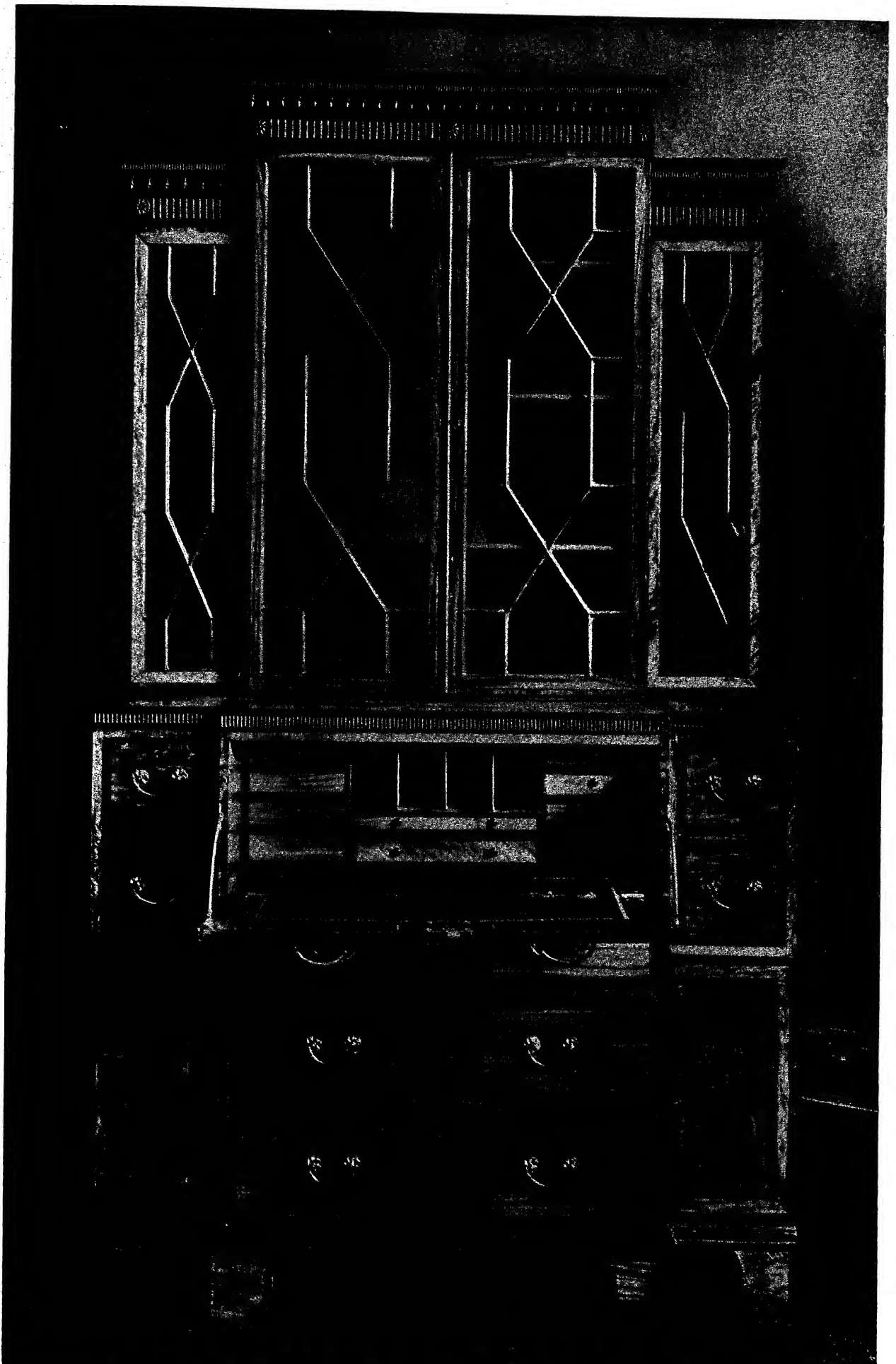


FIG. 186.—SATIN-WOOD AND MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE BOOK-CASE. Height, 7 feet  
width, 3 feet 6 inches. Property of ALAN MACKINNON, Esq.





FIG. 187.—SATIN-WOOD AND MAHOGANY CHINA-CUPBOARD. Height, 6 feet 6 inches ; width, 3 feet 6 inches. Property of LADY QUILTER.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

two with round Wedgwood plaques. It is interesting to realise the decoration of walls that formed the background to such brilliant examples. Little is left to us in contemporary description, and the silks which evidently often formed backgrounds, have long ago decayed or been replaced by other decorations. The stronger Genoa velvets of an earlier period still exist, even wall-papers dating from the middle of the eighteenth century are found upon the walls, but hangings of silk such as those described by Mary Frampton in her *Journal*, as belonging to Mrs. Fitzherbert, have long ago disappeared. The arrangement of colour, even to the liveries of the footmen, must have formed a charming contrast to satin-wood furniture, for she writes in 1786 :—

‘A year or two after this, when Mrs. Fitzherbert was living in Pall Mall, within a few doors of Carlton House, we were at one of the assemblies she gave, which was altogether the most splendid I was ever at. Attendants in green and gold, besides the usual livery servants, were stationed in the rooms and up the staircase to announce the company, and carry about the refreshments, etc. The house was new and beautifully furnished. One room was hung with puckered blue satin, from which hangings the now common imitations in paper were taken.’

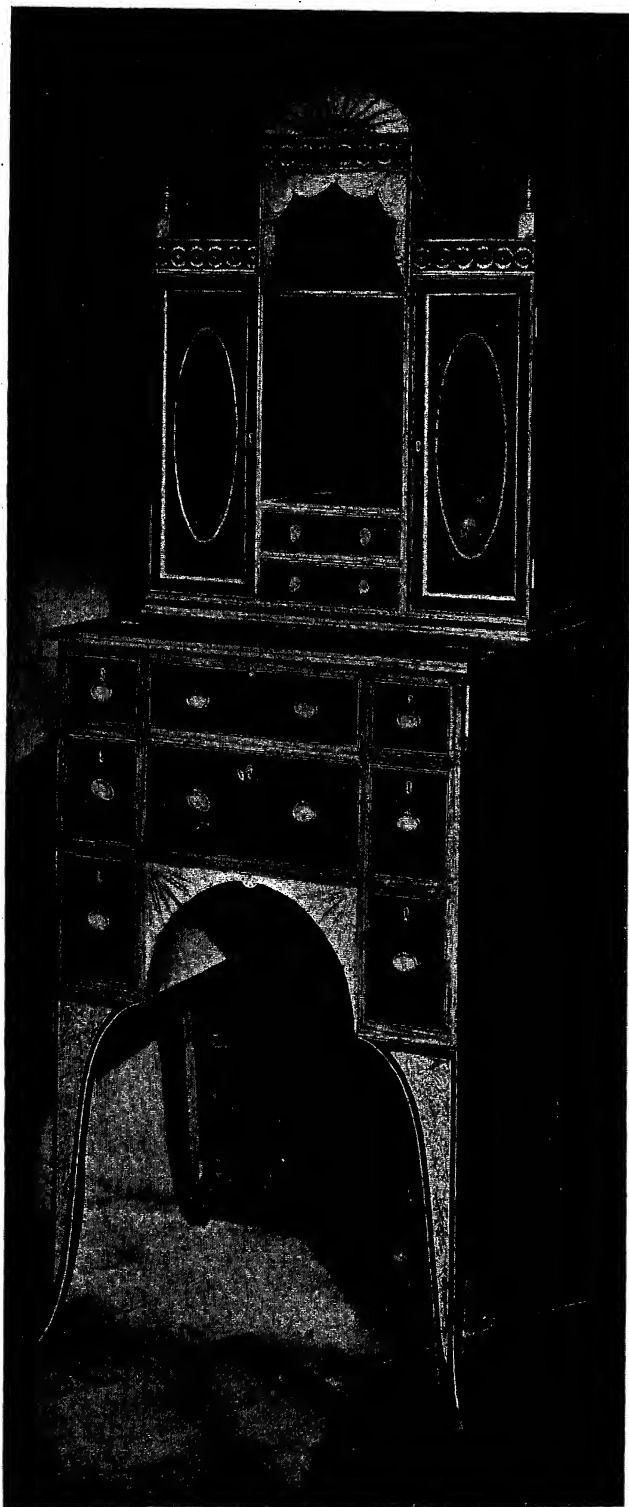


FIG. 188.—PAINTED AND INLAID MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE. Height, 5 feet 6 inches; length, 2 feet 4 inches; width, 1 foot 9 inches. Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

It must be remembered that this pretty and delicate furniture was used a great deal more at the time of its introduction than it is to-day, when these better pieces more or less form part of a collection, and that Sheraton designed such a piece as 'the ornamental ladies' secretary' (fig. 188) for daily use. The painting of the ribband frieze and drapery, the inlaid lunette, with the arrangement and proportions of the drawers and cupboards, are most original and successful; but the semi-cabriolet legs upon which this upper structure is mounted, although inlaid with exquisite work, are somewhat out of style, and too thick for perfect taste at their junction with the knee-hole. Such furniture and the book-case (fig. 189), equally delicate and refined in type, was doubtless made for such women as Lady Hamilton, Mrs. Siddons, and Mrs. Fitzherbert; its very colour and floral decoration suggest light and beautiful surroundings. In this fine example of Sheraton design the long lunette of the pediment is completed by the complementary curve of the wings, the framings of the doors are as light as possible, and the lower portion is varied by a tambour front, flanked on either side with small drawers most delicately painted with garlands of flowers; even the long brass handles help the flow of line that pervades the piece, and all severity is relieved by the scrolled and finely carved base of satin-wood uniting the taper legs. The wood is most carefully chosen, small in figure, and exactly suited to the fine scale of the painting.

Fig. 190 is a highly finished small cabinet, evidently designed by the same hand. The frieze and cornice are unfortunately missing. The colonnettes in projection at the corners of the lower portion, the broad and simple bandings to the satin-wood doors just sufficiently inlaid at their corners, and the beautiful drawing of the vases, all point to the work of Sheraton, and the introduction of silk behind what he called 'wire-worked doors' was a very favourite method with this master for obtaining an additional note of colour.

The last form of secretaire book-case (fig. 191), and completing this

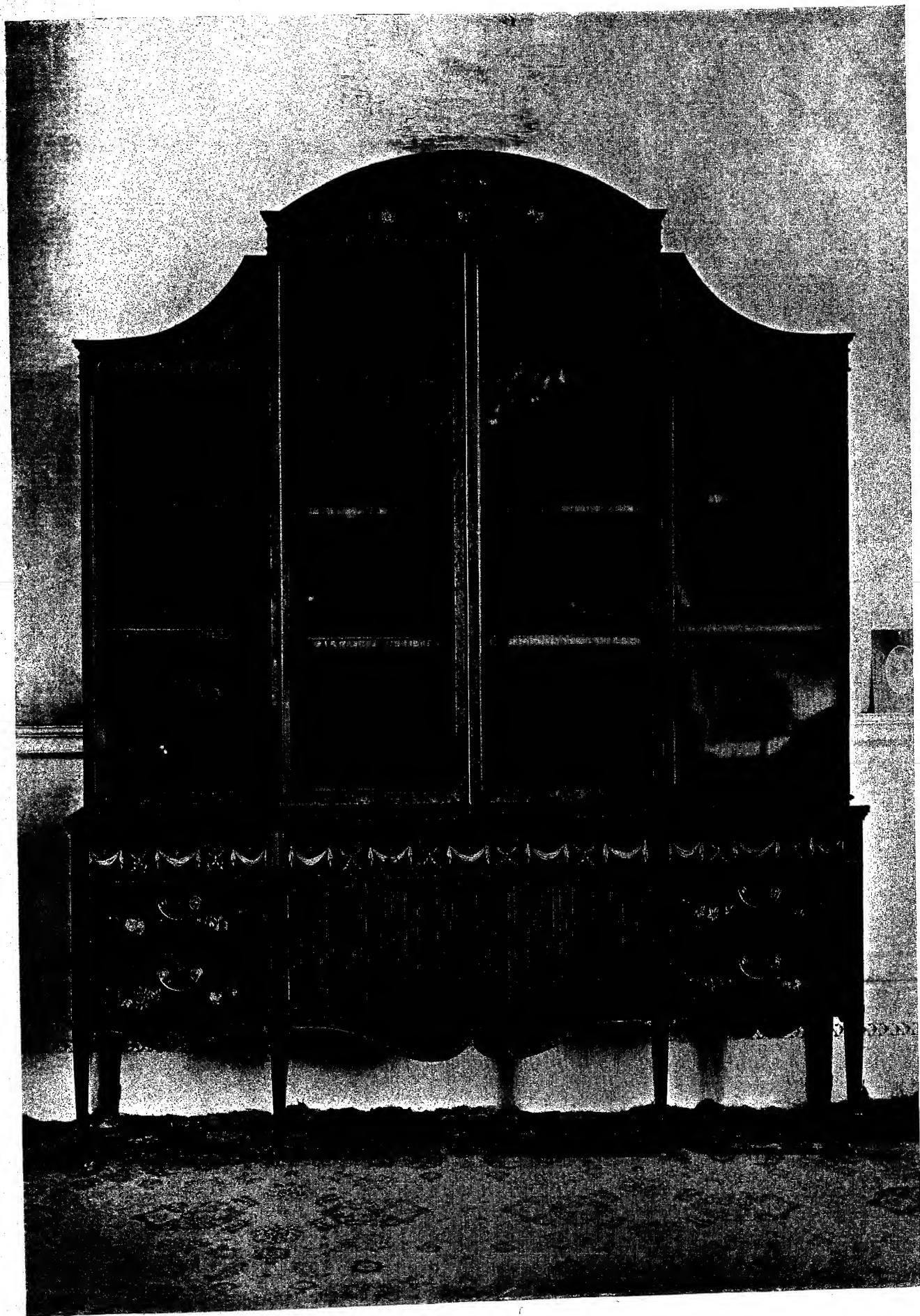


FIG. 189.—SATIN-WOOD PAINTED BOOK-CASE. Height, 7 feet 9 inches :  
length, 6 feet 6 inches. Property of ALFRED LITTLETON, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

series, is of about the year 1800. The doors here follow the lunette-shaped cornice, and the writing-desk opens with cylindrical movement; plain mahogany knobs take the place of brass handles, and the inlay is confined to an almost imperceptible line of ebony. This piece is signed W. B. White, and is almost Empire in feeling.

A very unusual, but genuine, specimen is given in fig. 192.

Although the framing of the glass to the upper portion may have undergone some alteration, the lower portion is untouched, the interest consisting in the circular openings, glazed and framed in brass for the display of curios, the front opening in two long doors; the upper portion is headed by a carefully painted frieze and a brass gallery, the whole standing upon a gilt table of about 1805. Besides these book- and china-case escritaires, other forms of writing-cabinets were very numerous during the last ten years of the eighteenth century. Sheraton refers to one as 'a piece intended for a gentleman to write at, to keep his own accounts, and serve as a library, the style of furnishing it is neat, and sometimes approaching to elegance, being at times made of satin-

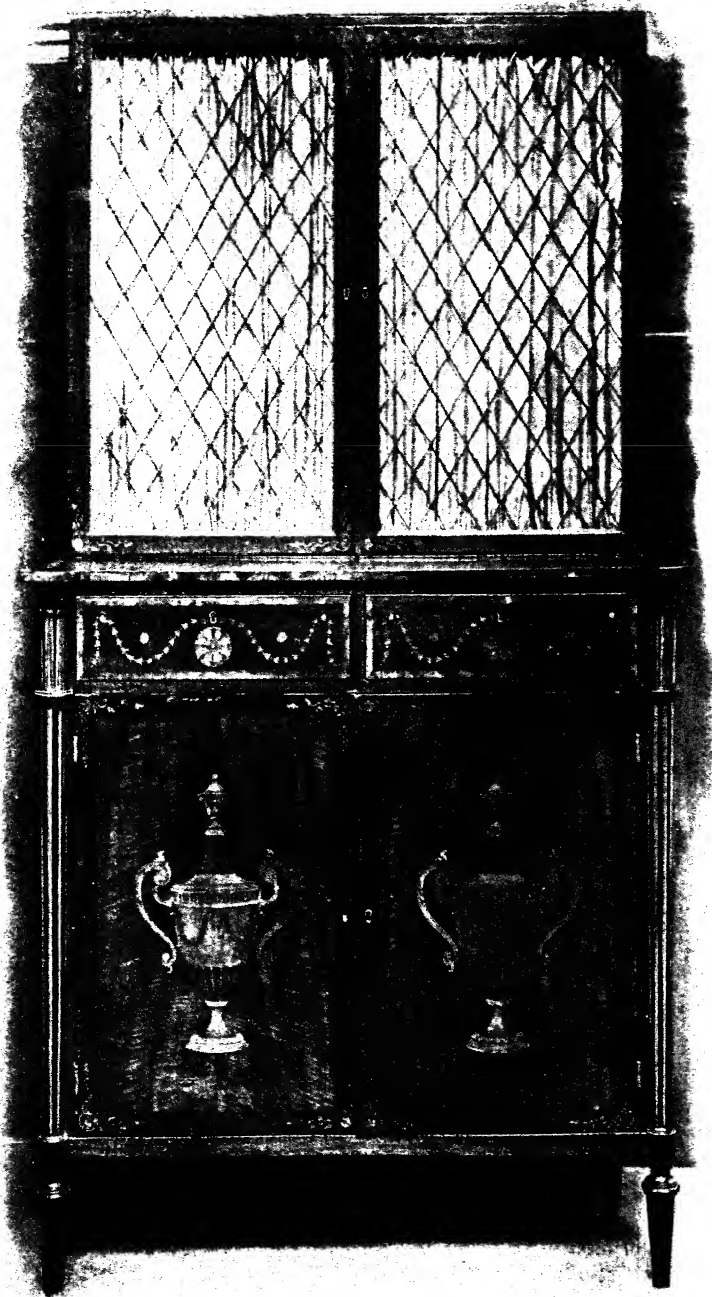


FIG. 190.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD BOOK-CASE CUPBOARD. Height, 5 feet; length, 2 feet 6 inches; depth, 1 foot 3 inches. Property of T. BASSETT, Esq.

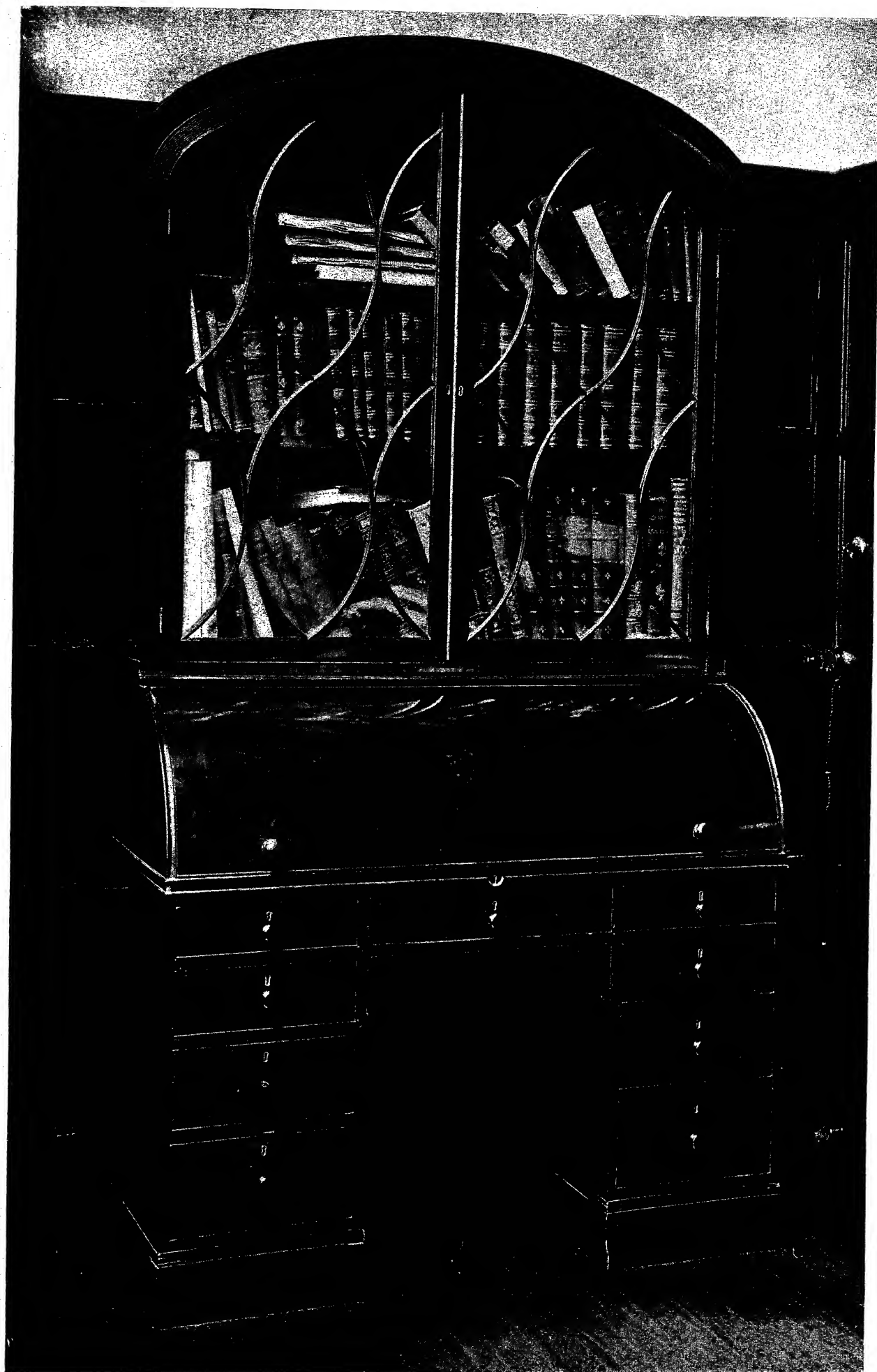


FIG. 191.—MAHOGANY BOOK-CASE AND ESCRITOIRE. Property of PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

wood with japanned ornaments.' The latter have nothing whatever to do with lacquer or an oriental taste, but refer to the painting of floral wreaths and garlands found upon so much of this furniture.

Fig. 193 is a 'gentleman's secretary' in satin-wood and mahogany, with the frieze painted or japanned in a ribbon and floral border; the bureau portion, mounted on taper legs, opens with the old-fashioned oblique flap supported by three slides. The very highly finished 'lady's secretary' (fig. 194), with a cylindrical front, is veneered in satin-wood and mahogany; the arrangement of rectangular lines that border the cylinder are very distinctive of the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the high stops to the taper legs are indicative of Sheraton.

The shaped writing-table (fig. 195) is also represented in *The Cabinet-maker's and Upholsterer's Drawing-book*, and described as 'a Kidney Table on account of its resemblance to that intestine part of animals so called.' It is veneered with pollarded oak and rosewood, extremely rich in the grain and beautiful in colour, a perforated brass gallery surrounds the table on three sides; the writing-chair in the early Louis XVI. style, but of English make, is about fifteen years earlier in date than the table.

On Plate XIII., fig. A, is one of the numerous inlaid tea-caddies produced by the schools of Hepplewhite and Sheraton. This example is in choice satin-wood inlaid with a large waved patera of green-stained wood and holly, repeated all round the box, on the lid, and covers to the inside boxes; these tea-caddies are often of most elaborate finish, for they succeeded the shagreen and mahogany cases of Anne and the earlier Georges, containing silver tea-caddies made in the taste of these times. Knife-, fork-, and spoon-cases were made with similar care, and Sheraton refers to them as follows :—

'Of the knife-cases little need be said. It is only wanted to be observed that the corner pilasters of the left-hand case have small flutes of white holly or other coloured wood let in, and the middle pilasters have very narrow cross bands all round with the

PLATE XIII (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

(a) INLAID SATINWOOD TEA-CADDY

HEIGHT,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  INCHES

LENGTH, 12 "

DEPTH,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  "

PROPERTY OF  
PERCY MACQUOID, Esq.

(b) CIRCULAR KNIFE-CASE

HEIGHT, 2 FEET  $4\frac{1}{4}$  INCHES

PROPERTY OF  
BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.

(c) PAINTED SATINWOOD CHAIR

HEIGHT OF BACK, 3 FEET 1 INCH

HEIGHT OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 3 INCHES

PROPERTY OF  
BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.

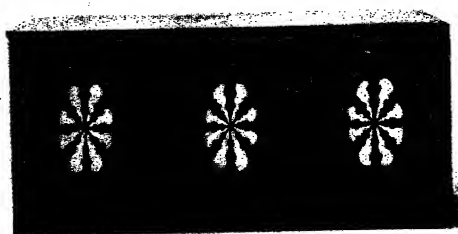
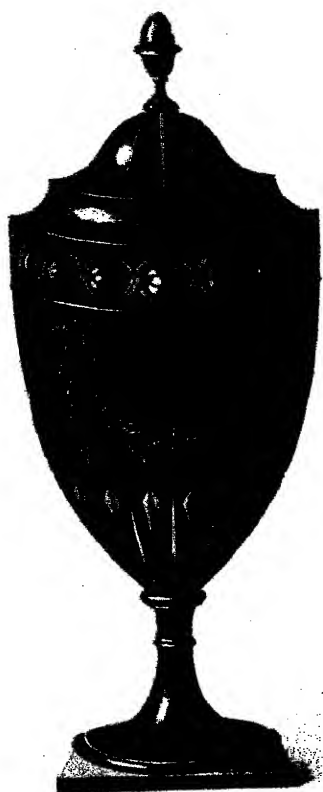
(d) PAINTED CHAIR

HEIGHT OF BACK, 2 FEET  $7\frac{1}{4}$  INCHES

HEIGHT OF SEAT, 1 FOOT 3









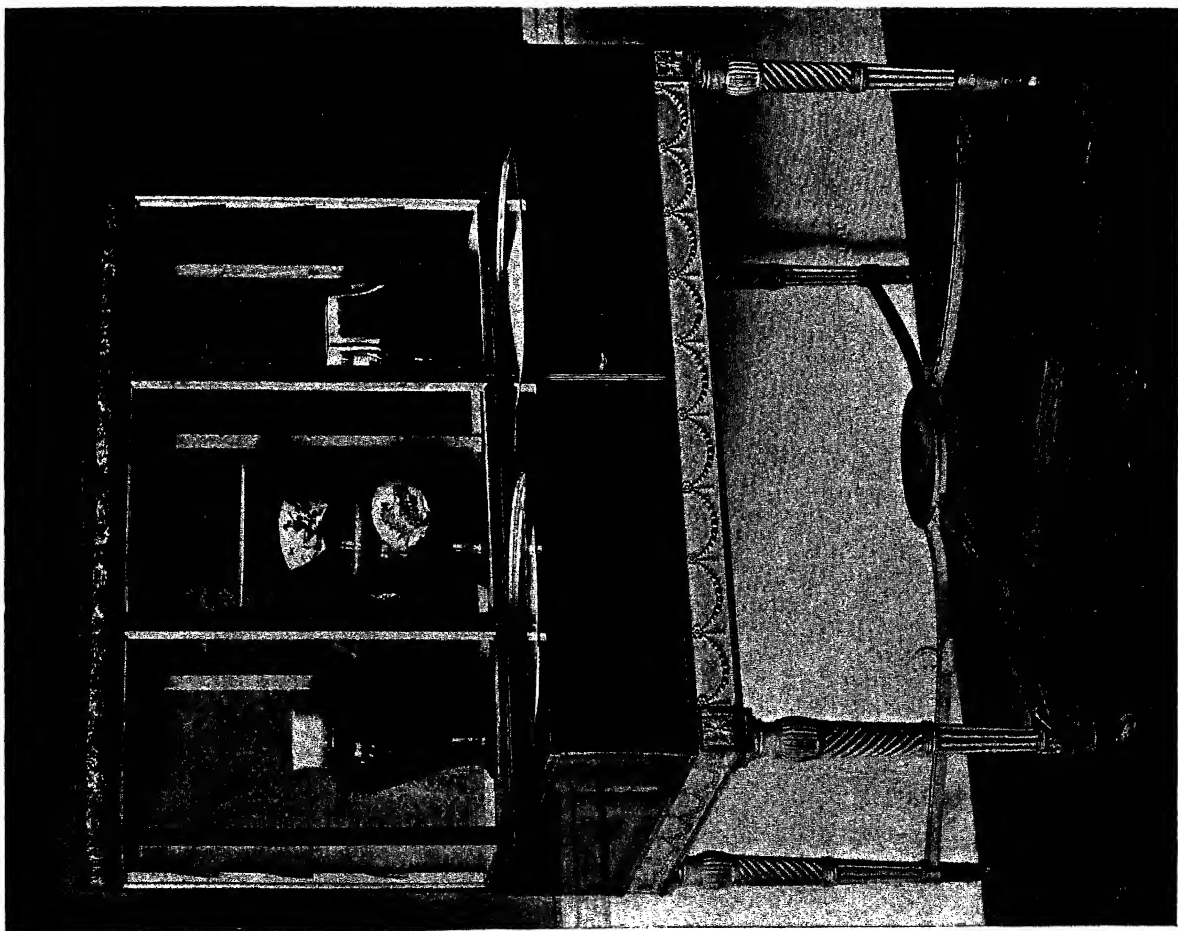


FIG. 192.—MAHOGANY AND SATIN-WOOD CURIO CUPBOARD. Height, 5 feet 8 inches; length, 3 feet 6 inches; width, 2 feet 2 inches. Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.

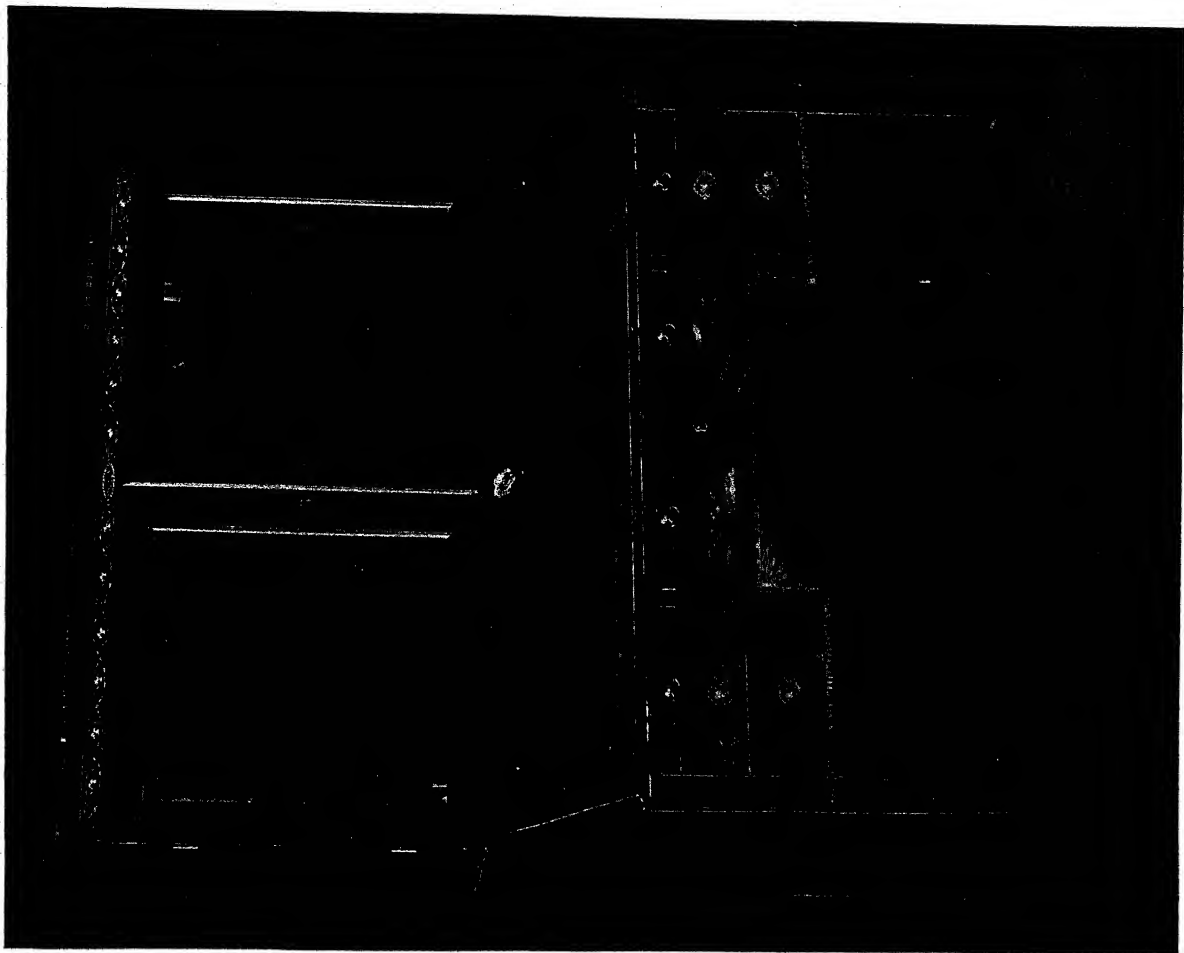


FIG. 193.—SATIN-WOOD AND MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE. Property of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

panels japanned in small flowers. The top is sometimes japanned and sometimes has only an inlaid patera. The half columns of the right-hand case are sometimes fluted out, and sometimes the flutes are let in. The feet may be turned and twisted, which will have a good effect.'

Fig. B, on the same plate, is a variety of one of these knife-cases.

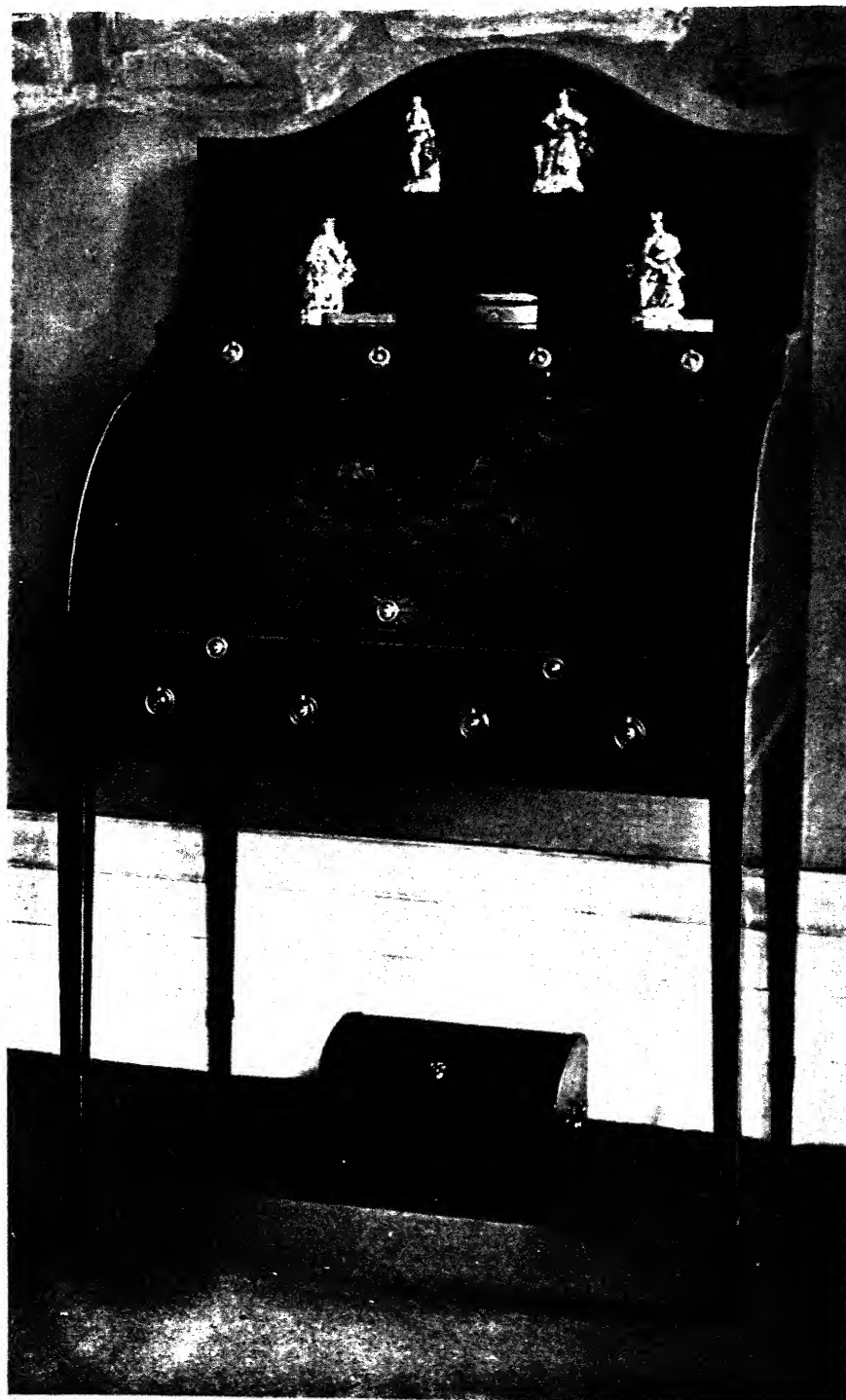


FIG. 194.—INLAID SATIN-WOOD AND MAHOGANY ESCRITOIRE.

Height, 4 feet 8 inches; width, 2 feet 8 inches; depth, 1 foot 10 inches.

Property of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

A very great number of small pieces of furniture of plain-painted and inlaid satin-wood such as ladies' work-tables, book-stands, and cases for miniatures or other small objects of art, were made under Sheraton's direction, for the taste of this designer leant towards delicately finished work. These pieces distributed about a room gave an appearance of elegance that generally accompanies the *fin de siècle* taste, and although we were at war with France, and comparatively little furniture can have been produced there between 1789 and 1795 on account of the Revolution, French fashions were considered the height of good taste, and formed the guiding motives in dress and furniture. The little table (fig. 196), of about 1795, is a specimen of Sheraton under French influence, and the delicate painting and treatment of the frame, with the almost Pompeian motive in the legs, show the ultra-classical feeling gradually pervading both countries. The same motives are shown in the

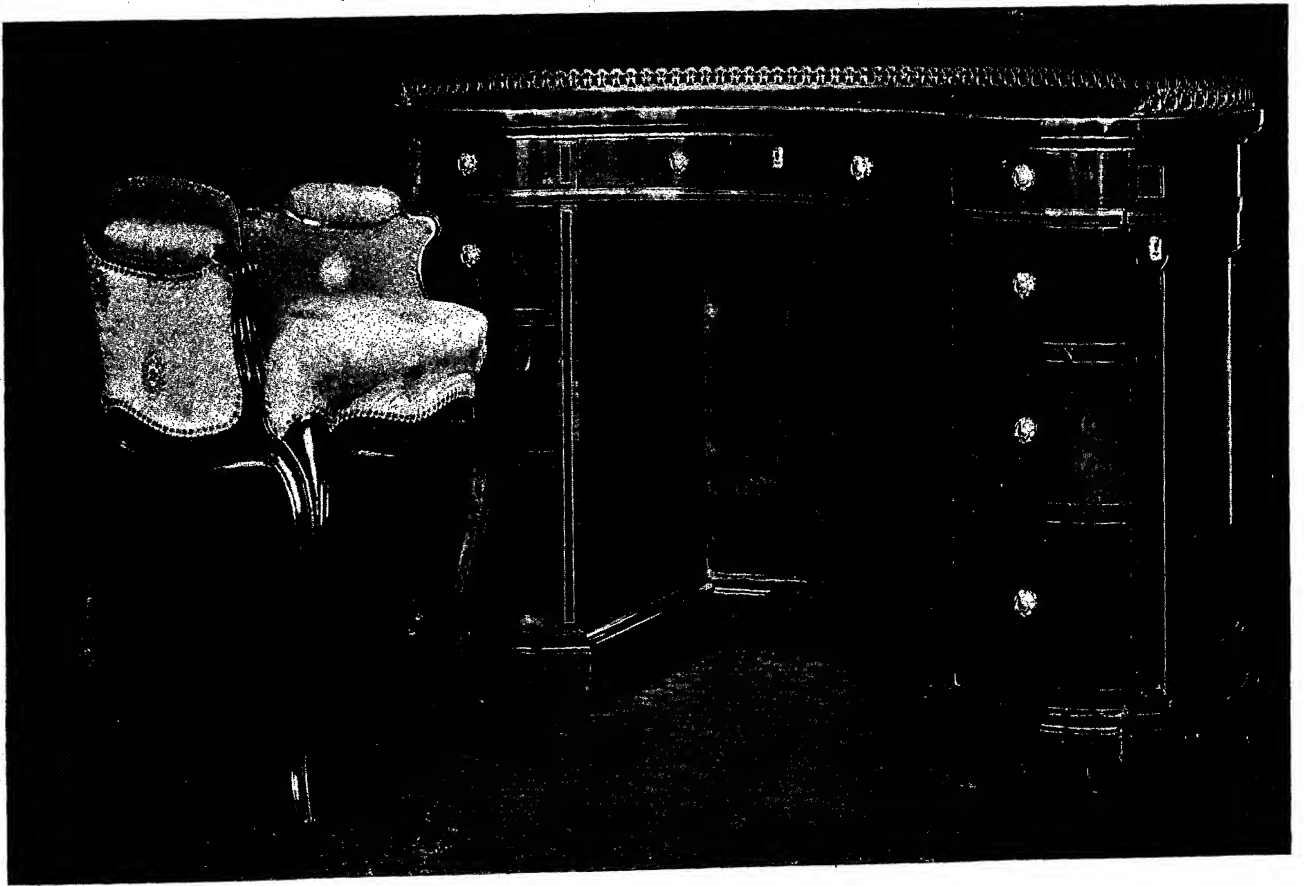


FIG. 195.—POLLARDED OAK AND ROSEWOOD WRITING-TABLE. Length, 4 feet 4 inches; height, 2 feet 5 inches. Property of Miss SCHOLFIELD.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

little gilt pouch-tables (fig. 197 and fig. 198), with tops painted to imitate coloured marbles, much resembling some of the Roman bronze tables being found at Pompeii about that time, a taste that was fostered in this country by the investigations and interests of Sir William Hamilton, then ambassador at the Court of Naples. Another work-box table, of about 1800, is shown in fig. 199, interesting for the cut-steel nails with which the box and legs are ornamented. This imitation of marble in paint, combined with satin-wood and tinsel, is also used on the very small tambour writing-table (fig. 200), another piece of fantastic classicism under Sheraton's influence.

On Plate xiv., fig. A, is a very delicate specimen of these work-



FIG. 196.—PAINTED SATIN-WOOD TABLE.  
Height, 2 feet 5 inches.



FIG. 197.—PAINTED WORK-TABLE.  
Height, 2 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

PLATE XIV (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

(a) PAINTED SATINWOOD WORK-TABLE

HEIGHT, 2 FEET  $9\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

DEPTH, 1 FOOT  $8\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

WIDTH, 2 FEET 1 INCH

PROPERTY OF

E. MARSHALL-HALL, Esq.

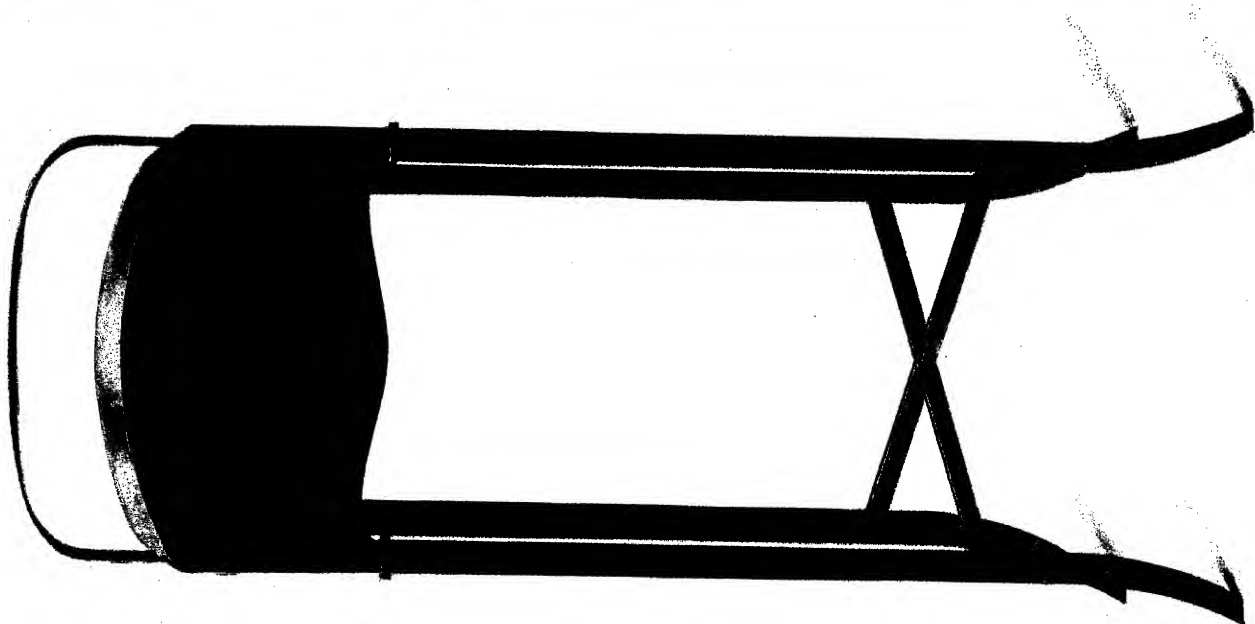
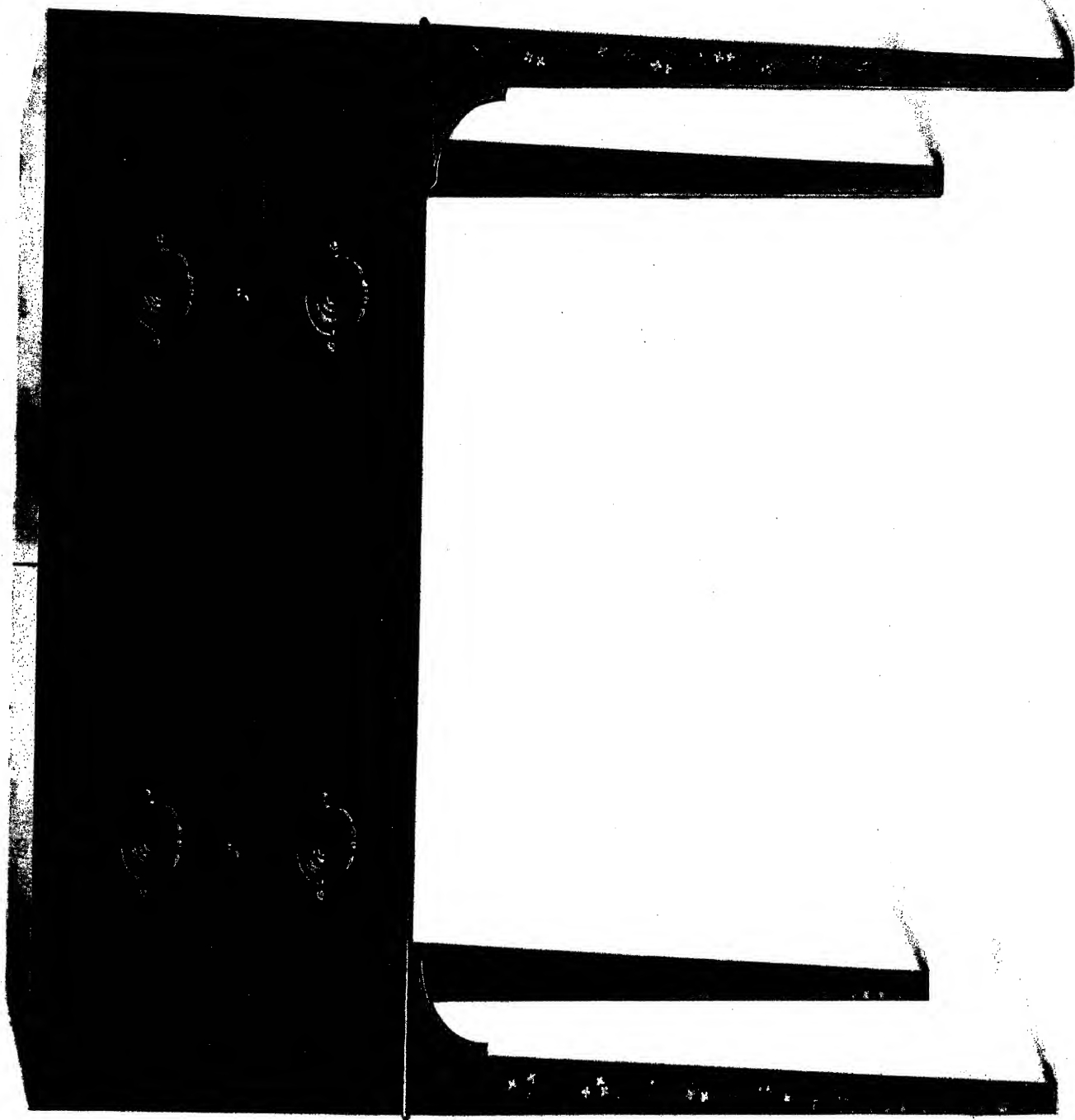
(b) PAINTED SATINWOOD DRESSING-TABLE

HEIGHT, 2 FEET  $10\frac{1}{2}$  INCHES

PROPERTY OF

E. MARSHALL-HALL, Esq.







# ENGLISH FURNITURE

tables in satin-wood painted with flowers, a handle of the same wood being attached to the box, the whole construction being so delicate that its existence of over one hundred years is surprising, but the condition of the veneer is perfect and the handle uninjured. On the same plate can be seen a dressing-table of earlier date. It is of plain satin-wood, the ornament being etched in a fine black line, and when open, discloses a series of partitions to contain various washes and cosmetics. A folding looking-glass occupied the centre of the interior, the brushes, combs, etc., being kept in the lower drawer. This shape was also much made in mahogany, its fashion lasting from about 1780 till 1795.

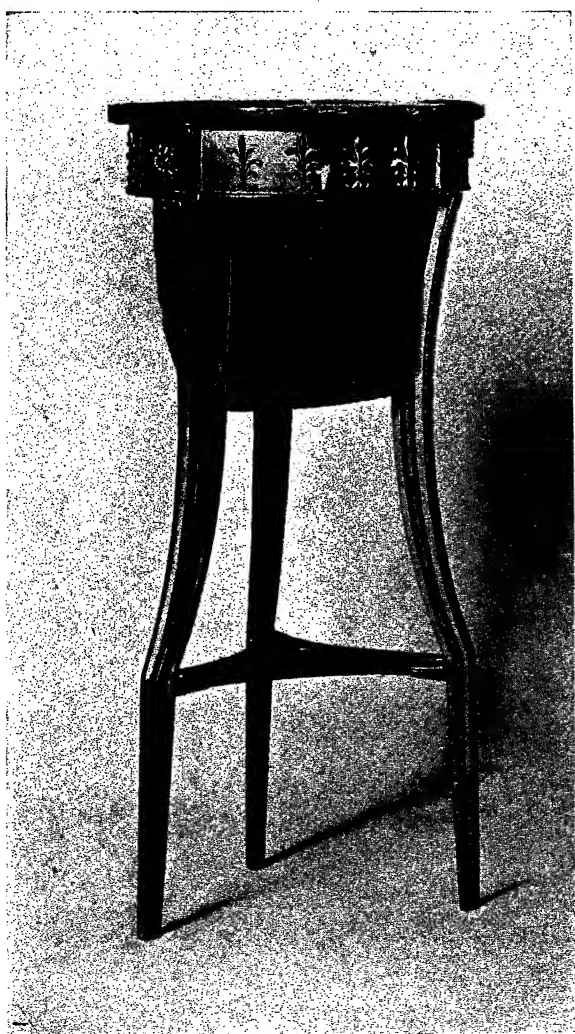


FIG. 198.—PAINTED WORK-TABLE.

Height, 2 feet 4 inches.

Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

4 : 2 E

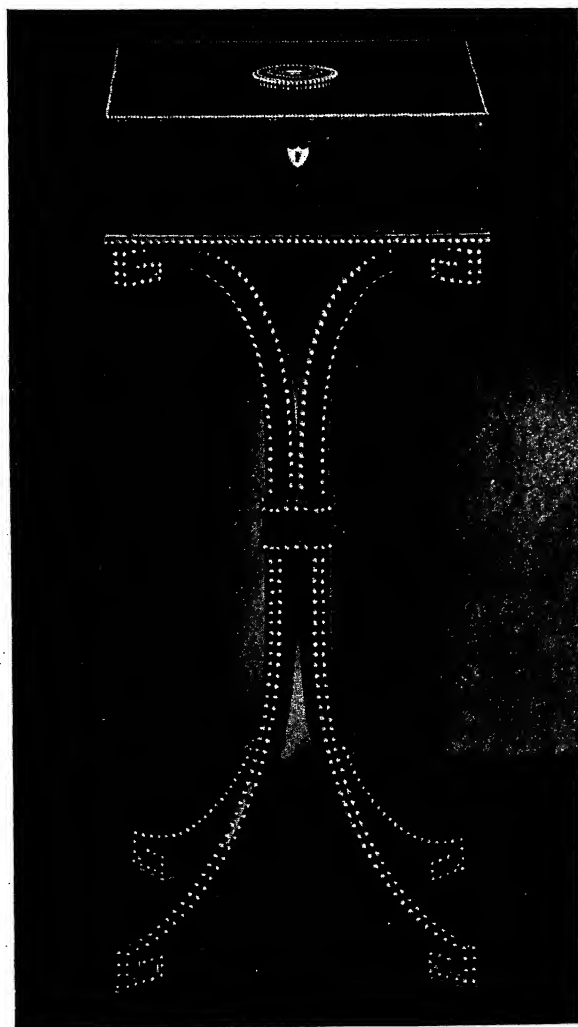


FIG. 199.—WORK-BOX TABLE.

Property of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq.

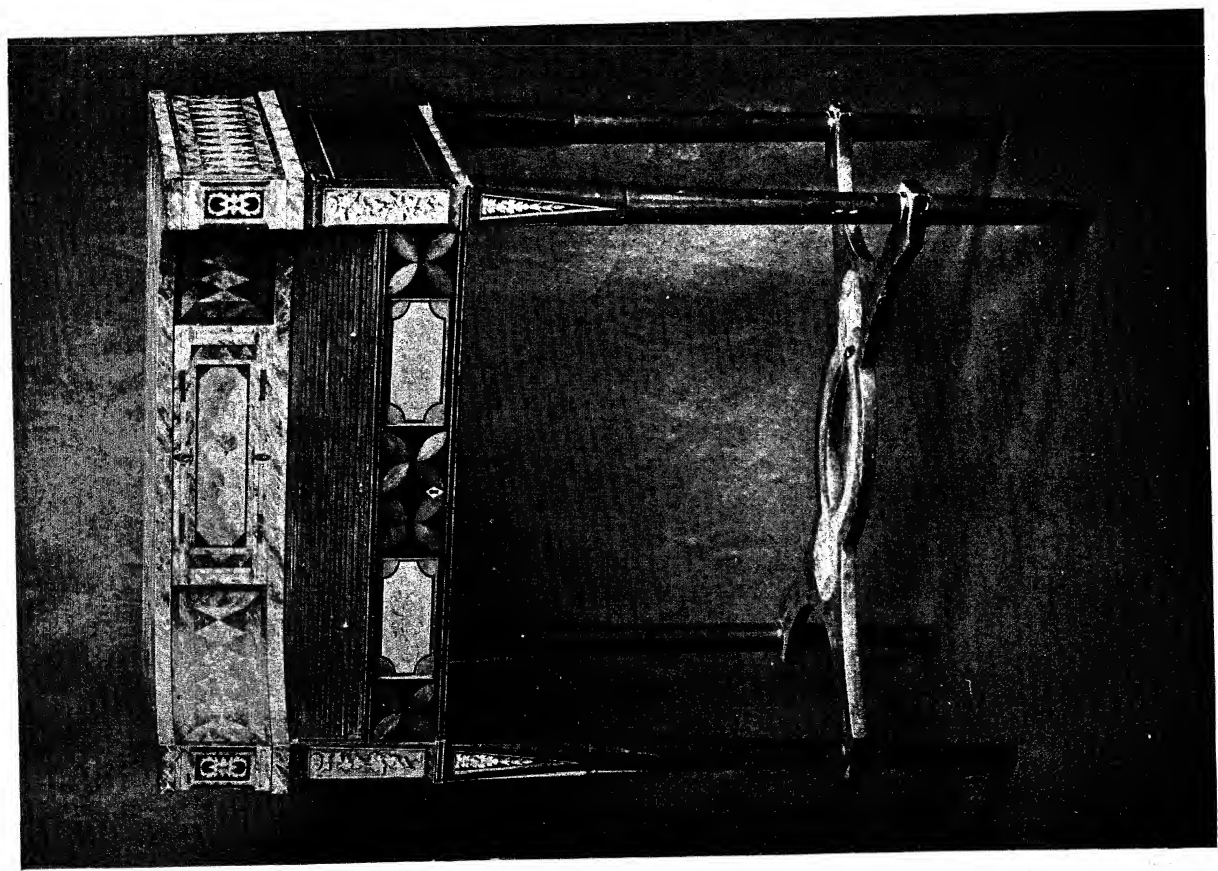


FIG. 200.—PAINTED SATIN-WOOD ESCRUTOIRE.

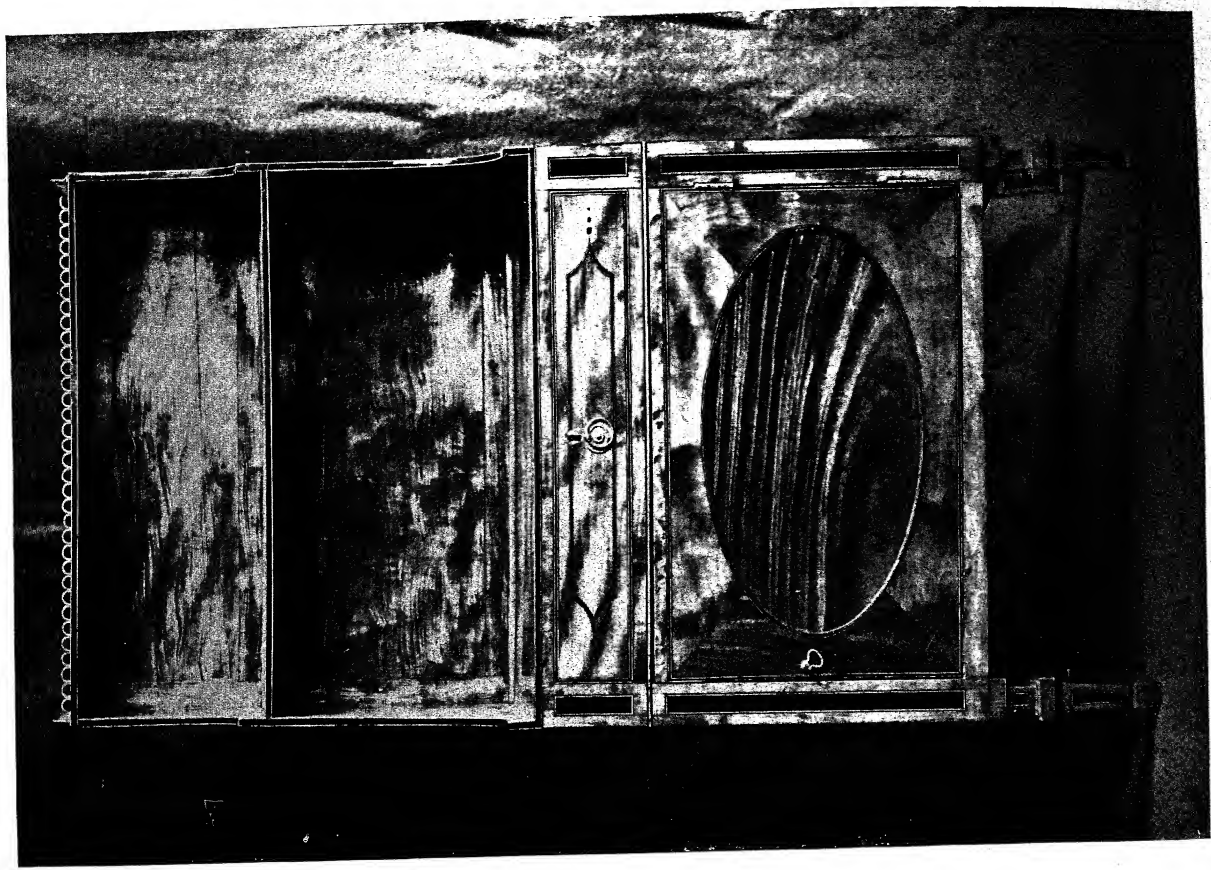


FIG. 201.—SATIN-WOOD CHINA-CASE.  
Height, 2 feet 10 inches; length, 1 foot 9 inches.  
Property of ALFRED LITTLETON, Esq.



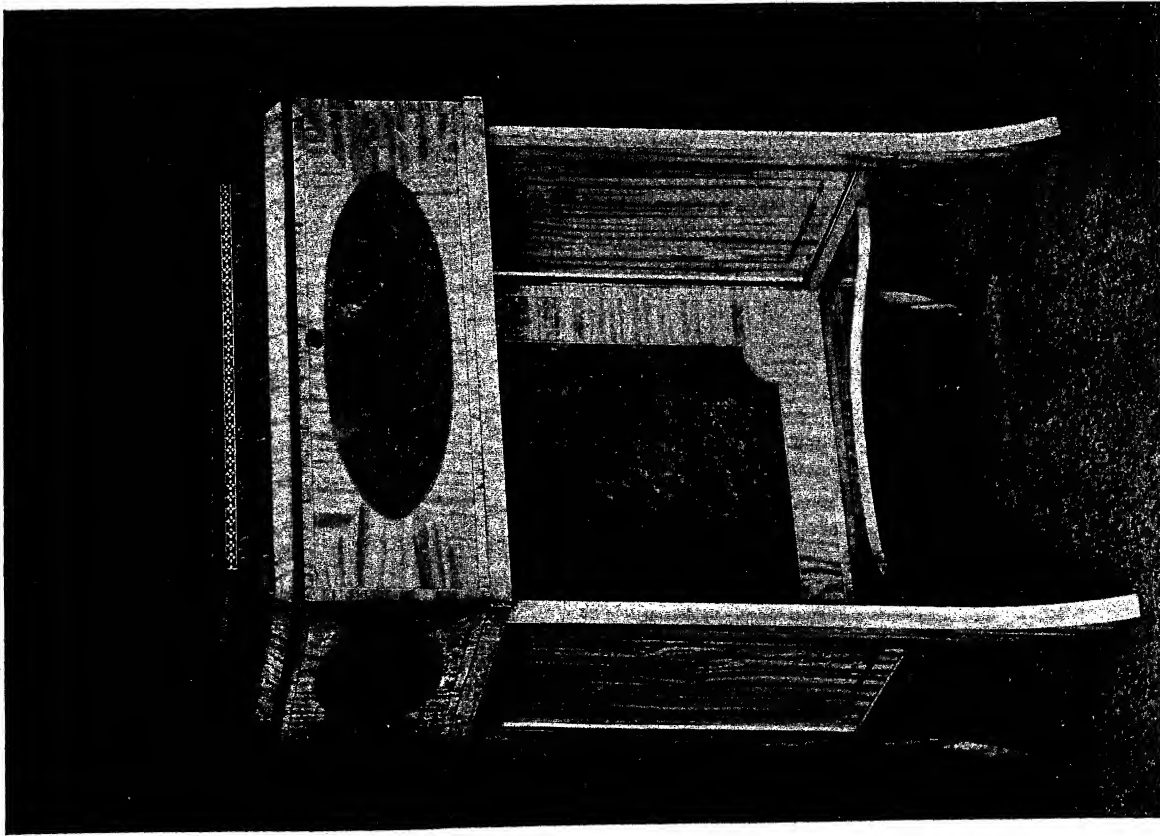


FIG. 202.—SATIN-WOOD INTAGLIO CABINET.  
Height, 3 feet 4 inches; depth, 1 foot 2 inches.  
Property of E. MARSHALL-HALL, Esq.

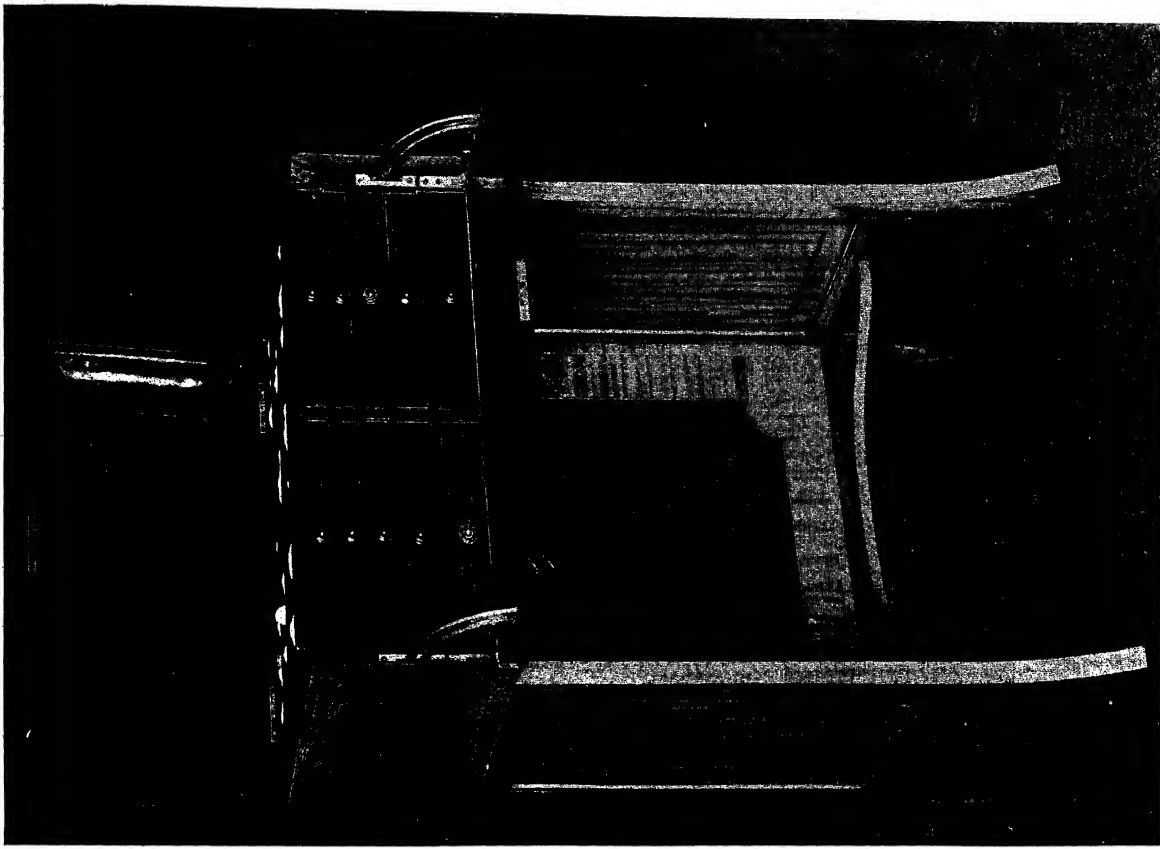


FIG. 203.—SAME CABINET, OPEN.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Small cupboards, with china shelves of satin-wood, such as fig. 201, are often found surmounted by a brass gallery; the example given is inlaid with panels and lines of ebony, and is of the school of Hepplewhite.

Fig. 202 is a very highly finished coin- or intaglio-cabinet of West India satin-wood, with panels of amboyna. The lid is coved and japanned with a bold palmated design in colours; the inside faced

with rosewood, and shown in fig. 203, opens in a series of shallow drawers. Larger cabinets for these collections, veneered and inlaid in an elaborate manner, were also made. In the journal and letters of Samuel Curwen, an American refugee, one of these is mentioned as follows :—

‘1783, *April 5th*.—Called at Mr. Jassey’s to have a sight of the curious cabinet of satin-wood, inlaid and decorated with many devices, figurative, etc., on front and sides. Its contents, rows of drawers containing impressions of intaglios, cameras, seals, etc., to the number of more than six thousand, duplicated, to be sent to the Empress of Russia. She is a great encourager of artists, particularly English ones.’

Stands to contain music and portfolios for the numerous engravings so fashionable at this time also became recog-

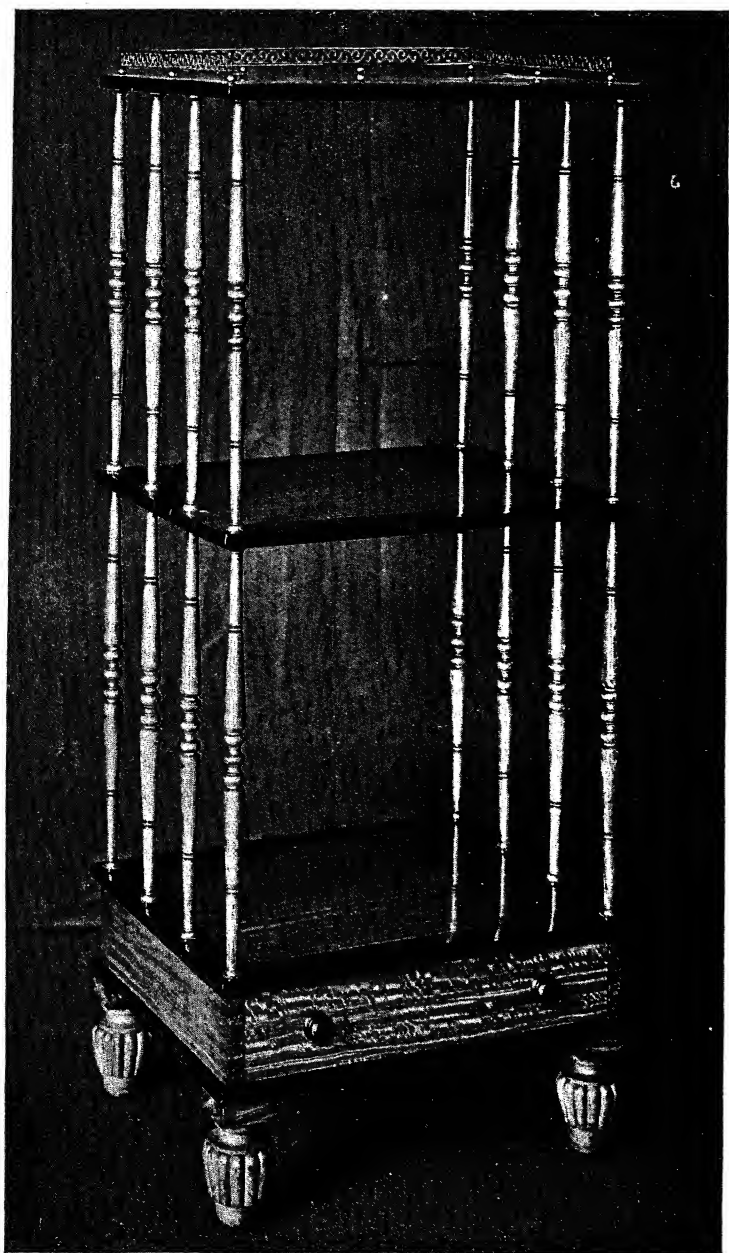


FIG. 204.—SATIN-WOOD FOLIO STAND.  
Height, 3 feet 6 inches; width, 1 foot 6 inches.  
Property of E. MARSHALL-HALL, Esq.

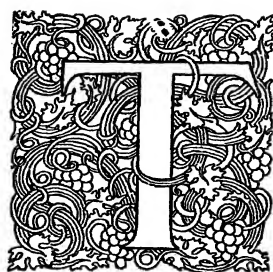
## ENGLISH FURNITURE

nised as necessary pieces of furniture. Fig. 204, of about 1800, veneered with West India satin-wood and bordered with rosewood, has satin-wood balusters and feet, whilst the stand from the music-room at Harewood (fig. 205) is of mahogany, finely fluted and lined with ebony, and about ten years later in date.



FIG. 205.—MAHOGANY MUSIC-STAND. Length, 5 feet 4 inches; height, 2 feet 5 inches; depth, 2 feet 9 inches. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

## CHAPTER VII



TABLES of all descriptions were made in great quantities during the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century, the increase in the number of side-tables, apart from those used for cards, being especially noticeable. Dining-tables were for the first time made to extend by means of slides, and the taper legs to dining-tables, which had never really been satisfactory from a point of stability, gave place to a fluted leg of stronger construction soon after 1800; satin-wood was occasionally employed as a border to these tables, but veneer and inlay were unpractical and seldom employed. Drinking after dinner was still a polite and recognised custom, and drunkenness was facilitated by the adoption of port in place of claret, which, until about 1770, had been the fashionable wine; the following paragraph, taken from the *Morning Post*, July 26, 1800, shows that intemperance was not confined to the laity:—

‘At a village in Cheshire, last year, three clergymen, after dinner, ate fourteen quarts of nuts, and, during their sitting, drank six bottles of port wine, and No other liquor.’

Tables especially designed for drinking were made of narrow horse-shoe shape, the open end being placed opposite the fire, where a bag of network kept the biscuits crisp. In the drinking-table (fig. 206), of about 1790, adjustable circular fans rise as fire-screens on either side, whilst metal wells with brass covers sufficiently large to contain ice and bottles, are sunk in the tables to keep the wine cool. In fig. 207, a later specimen of about 1810, the fans are replaced by a curtain hung upon a brass rail headed with Empire busts, the biscuit net is shown, but the wine was placed on the two trays that radiate from the centre; the

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

double ridge on the surface of the table is to ensure the comparative safety of the glasses during drinking, and the fans and curtain to prevent apoplexy. In decoration, the legs and frame show the clumsy motives evolved from Empire furniture that eventually became celebrated as early Victorian.

Small tables during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century



FIG. 206.—MAHOGANY DRINKING-TABLE. Height, 2 feet; width, 1 foot 10 inches.  
Property of Miss TYNDALL.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

were often painted in beautiful taste. In fig. 208 and fig. 209 can be seen a charming combination of hairwood veneer (sycamore) and painting. The edges of the Pembroke table are gracefully serpentine, and garlands of roses on a buff-painted border are edged with tulip-wood. The centre is occupied by a painting of Venus in the style of Zucchi, surrounded by garlands of flowers tied with bows of pink ribbon ; these colours on the grey ground of the stained sycamore have a most refined effect.



FIG. 207.—MAHOGANY DRINKING-TABLE. Property of F. BERENS, Esq.



FIG. 208.—TOP OF PAINTED SATIN-WOOD TABLE. Length, 3 feet ; width, 2 feet 4 inches.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE



FIG. 209.—TOP OF PAINTED HAIRWOOD CARD-TABLE. Length, 3 feet.

The card-table to match, originally one of a pair, resembles the Pembroke in colour and arrangement ; the legs of both are veneered with the same wood, painted with pendants of green garrya husks, and taper delicately in the style of 1785. Side-tables (such as fig. 211) were often japanned entirely with cream white; the edges and carved portions gilded. The top (fig. 210) is elaborately painted with flowers and subjects on the cream ground, which afforded an opportunity for more delicate and brilliant results than the bare surface of the veneer ; they were invariably made in pairs, and when joined together, formed an oval table of useful size; in fig. 213 a pair are united in this manner. The sides and legs of these tables are entirely gilt, the latter showing the balustered development introduced by Pergolesi, who probably painted the satin-wood top (fig. 212), for the flowers and ribbons are touched in with consummate skill; the date being about 1790.

The finely executed piece from Hatfield (fig. 214) is probably from an early design by Sheraton, as the curves are most unusual, the back



FIG. 210.—TOP OF TABLE (FIG. 211).

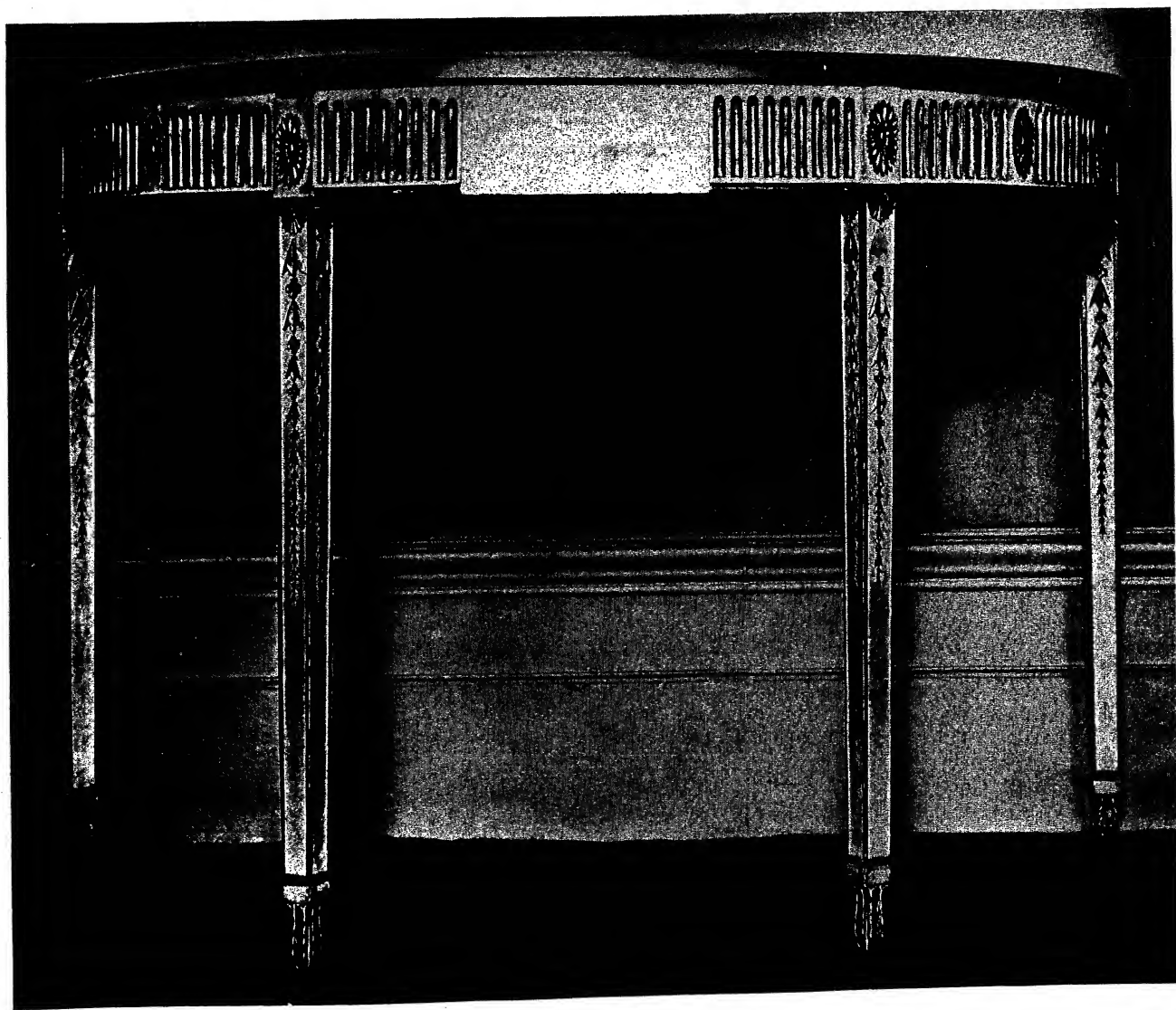


FIG. 211.—PAINTED SIDE-TABLE. Property of F. PARTRIDGE, Esq.



FIG. 212.—TOP OF SATIN-WOOD PAINTED TABLE.



FIG. 213.—GILT SIDE-TABLE. Length, 3 feet 6 inches.  
Property of F. PARTRIDGE, Esq.

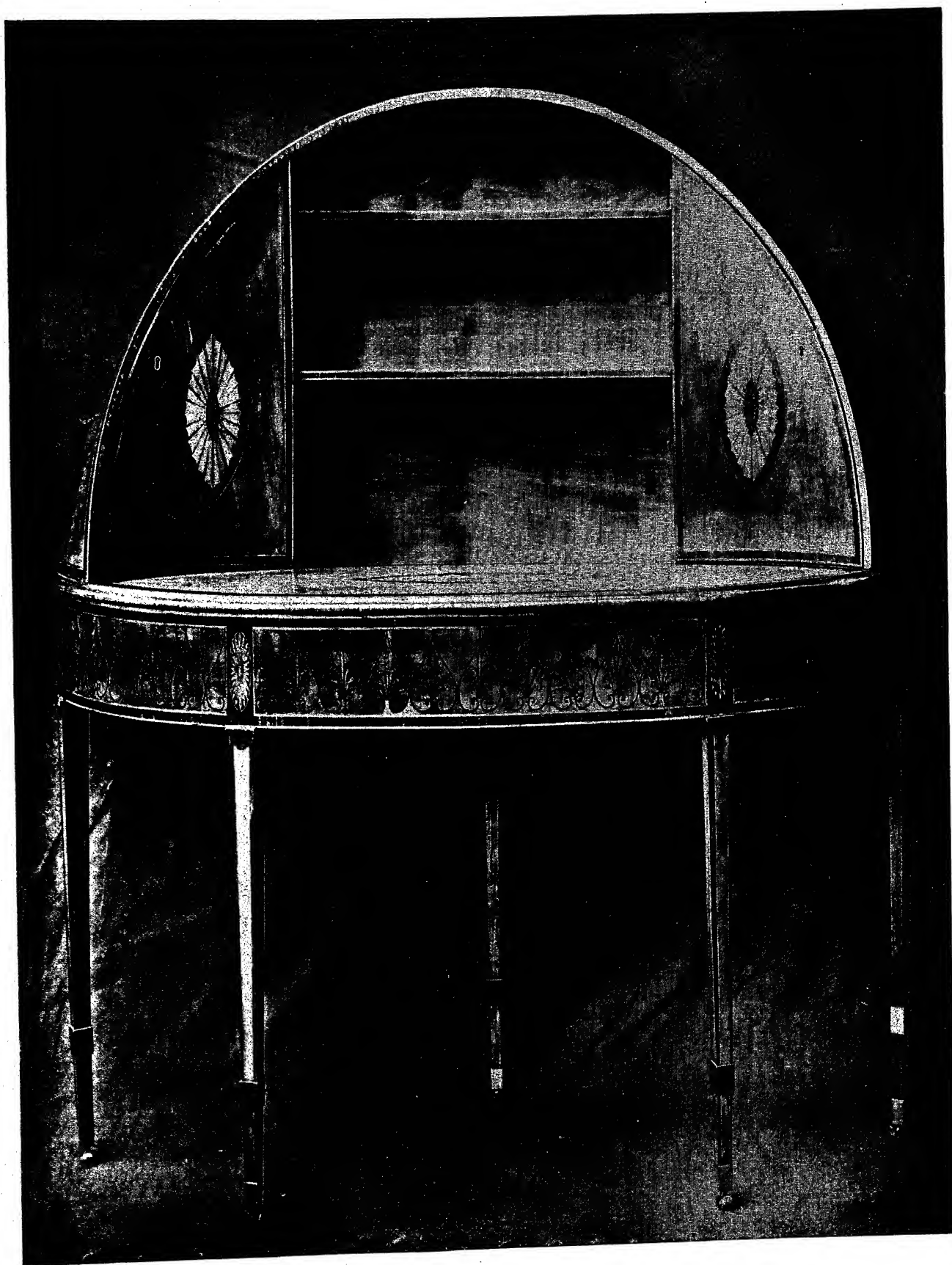


FIG. 214.—SATIN-WOOD SIDE-TABLE. Height, 4 feet 4 inches; length, 4 feet 4 inches.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF SALISBURY.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

being tub-shaped, and the cupboards and shelves that surmount the table are on the section of a circle; it no doubt was made for a semi-circular alcove, but now stands out in the room; the heart-shaped and honeysuckle inlaid frieze is of remarkable finish, and the very high stops to the feet, almost amounting to collars, show the date is about 1790.

After 1800, tables, like all other furniture, began to show signs of the coming dissolution, and the taper leg that for twenty-five years had been such a marked feature in all this furniture was replaced by a different structure. In the Empire round table (fig. 215), with a yew top and black painted legs, traditional design of Adam is evident, but the palmated ornament on the legs is meaningless, and the relative proportion of the



FIG. 215.—YEW TABLE. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

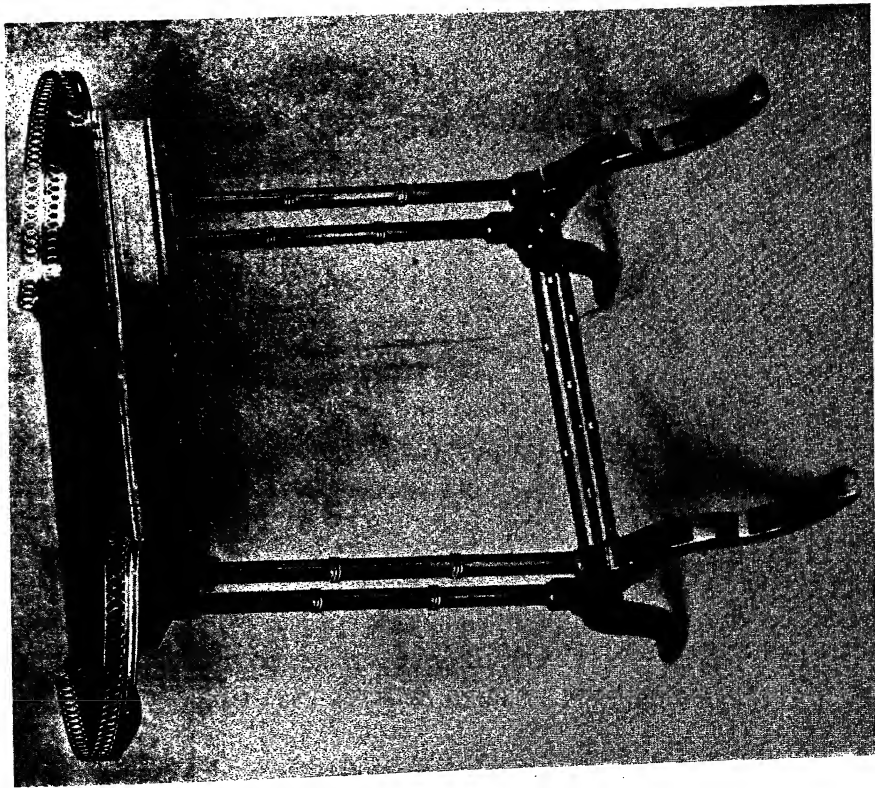


FIG. 216.—MAHOGANY CHESS-TABLE.  
Height, 2 feet 4 inches; length, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

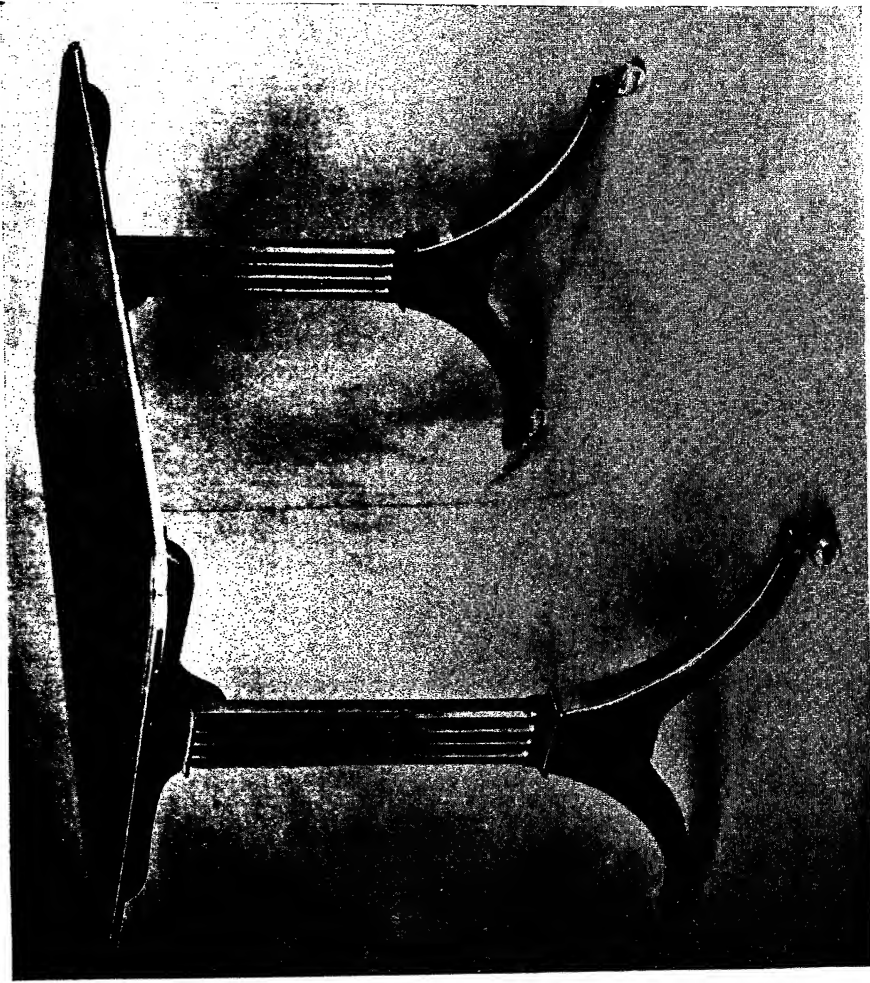


FIG. 217.—SATIN-WOOD TABLE. Length, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

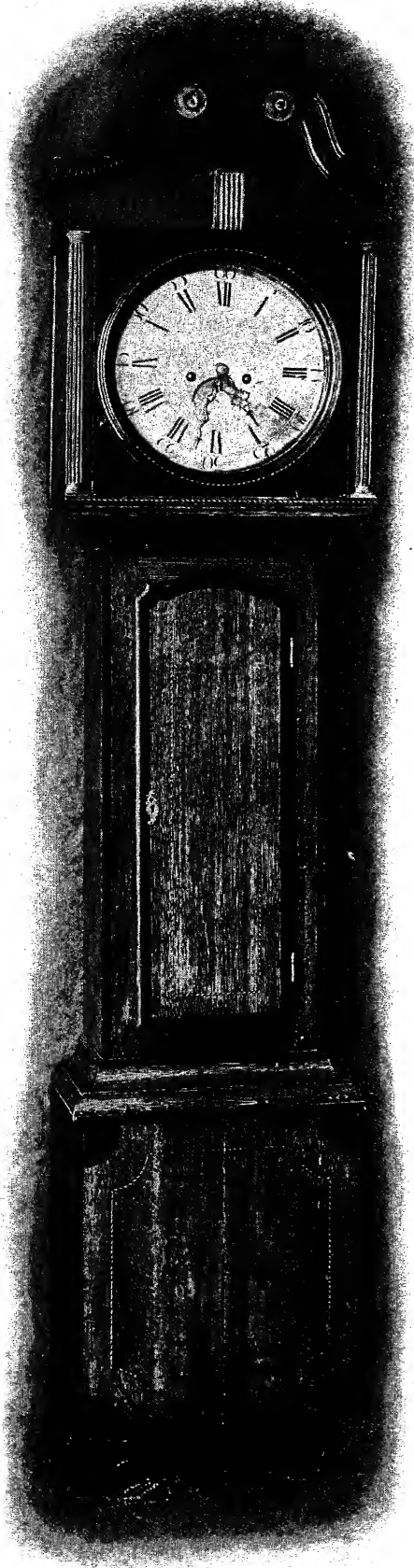


FIG. 218.—OAK AND MAHOGANY CLOCK.

Property of HERBERT CANAAN, Esq.

hoofs forming the feet, to the rams' heads, is ugly. Circular tables of this description with drawers are continually found mounted on a central support that branches into three or four curved legs, capped with brass lion paws' feet. These were accompanied by small oblong tables in satin-wood and mahogany, supported at either end by central pilasters resting on yoke-shaped legs. The chess-table (fig. 216 and fig. 217) represents specimens of the period of Waterloo, but beyond their connection with these important times have but little interest.

Tall clocks continued to be made during the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century very much on the same lines of those immediately preceding them. Fig. 218 is a handsome clock of about 1780, very simple and good in its proportions, and of finely selected mahogany and oak, but the demand for tall clocks was evidently small, for elaborately inlaid specimens are not often found, nor are they even veneered with satin-wood, which proves they were confined to the staircase, hall, and passages, and no longer placed in sitting-rooms where the new furniture was all inlaid. Sometimes novelty was attempted, as in fig. 219, where the heading is ballooned and surmounted by an inlaid hood supported on open pillars. The body in this instance tapers gracefully, the corners are inlaid with pendants of garrya and hairwood, and the design, probably by Sheraton, is homogeneous throughout.

Mirrors and wall lights presented no especial novelty until the advent of the convex



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

mirrors, which were a revival from the fifteenth century. After 1795 these were surrounded by a circular and deeply moulded gilt frame, studded with balls, and generally surmounted by an eagle connected from the beak by chains to cut-glass candle-brackets. In fig. 220, an unusually fine specimen, the heading is crowned by a dragon, disturbed by snakes who crawl from beneath a bed of acanthus; the foliage again being repeated at the base.

Wall lights towards the end of the century were generally of glass, but late specimens of the Adam type, approximating to Empire, and largely composed of wire and plaster gilt, are often found. Fig. 221 is from a house in Wells, and contemporary with the structural decoration of the room in which it hangs, and is about 1785. Glass lustres on the walls are mentioned in Samuel Curwen's *Journal*, in his interesting description of the rather doubtful place of entertainment called Carlisle Hall :—

*' May 21st, 1780.—Went to Carlisle Hall at a Sunday evening entertainment called the promenade; the employment of the company is simply walking through the rooms, being allowed tea, coffee, chocolate, lemonade, orgeat, negus, etc.; admission by ticket, three shillings; dress, decent, full not required; the ladies were rigged out in gaudy attire, attended by bucks, bloods, and macaronis, though it is also resorted to by persons of irreproachable character; among the wheat will be tares. The first room is of a moderate size covered with carpets, and furnished with wooden chairs and seats in the Chinese taste; passing through this you enter the long room, about eighty feet by forty, lighted with glass chandeliers and branches fixed to side-walls, against which stand sofas covered with silk; the company usually resorting to these rooms was about 700; this evening the house was thronged with a good thousand.'*

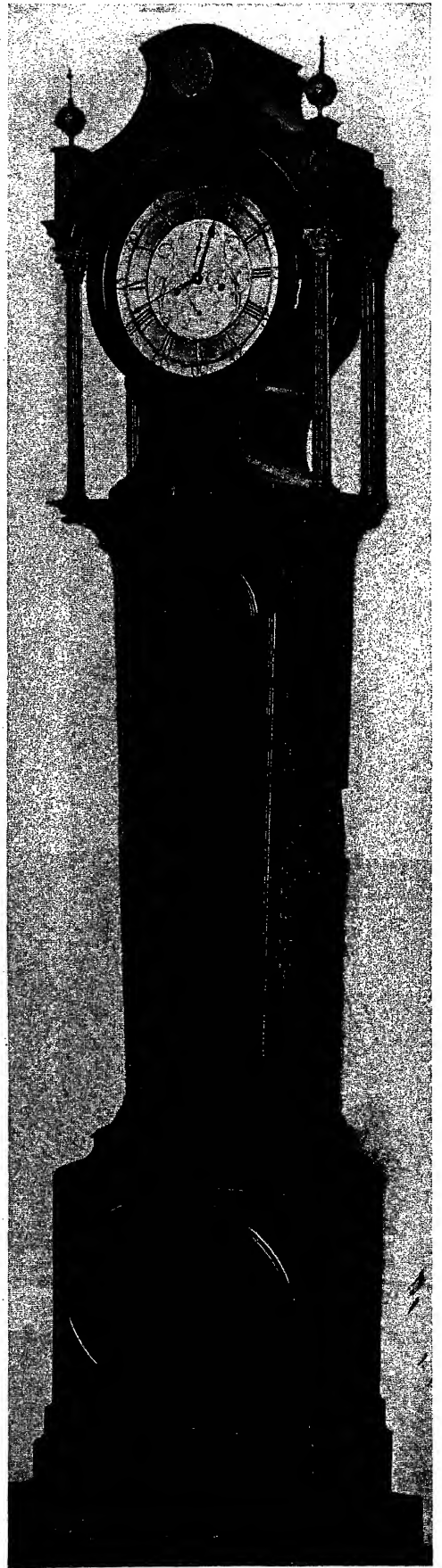


FIG. 219.—INLAID MAHOGANY CLOCK.  
Height, 6 feet 10 inches.  
Property of ALFRED DAVIS, Esq.

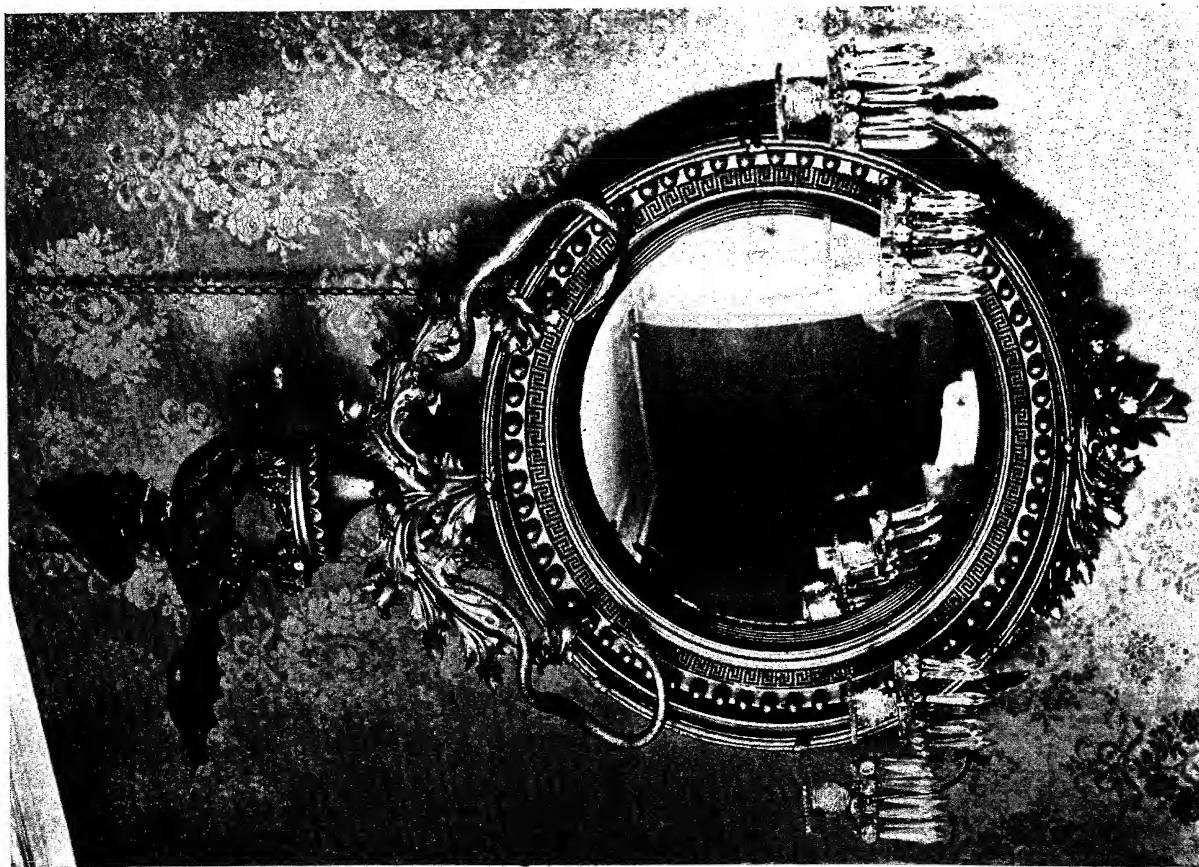


FIG. 220.—GILT CONVEX MIRROR.  
Height, 4 feet 7 inches; width, 3 feet 4 inches.  
Property of ALFRED LITTLETON, Esq.

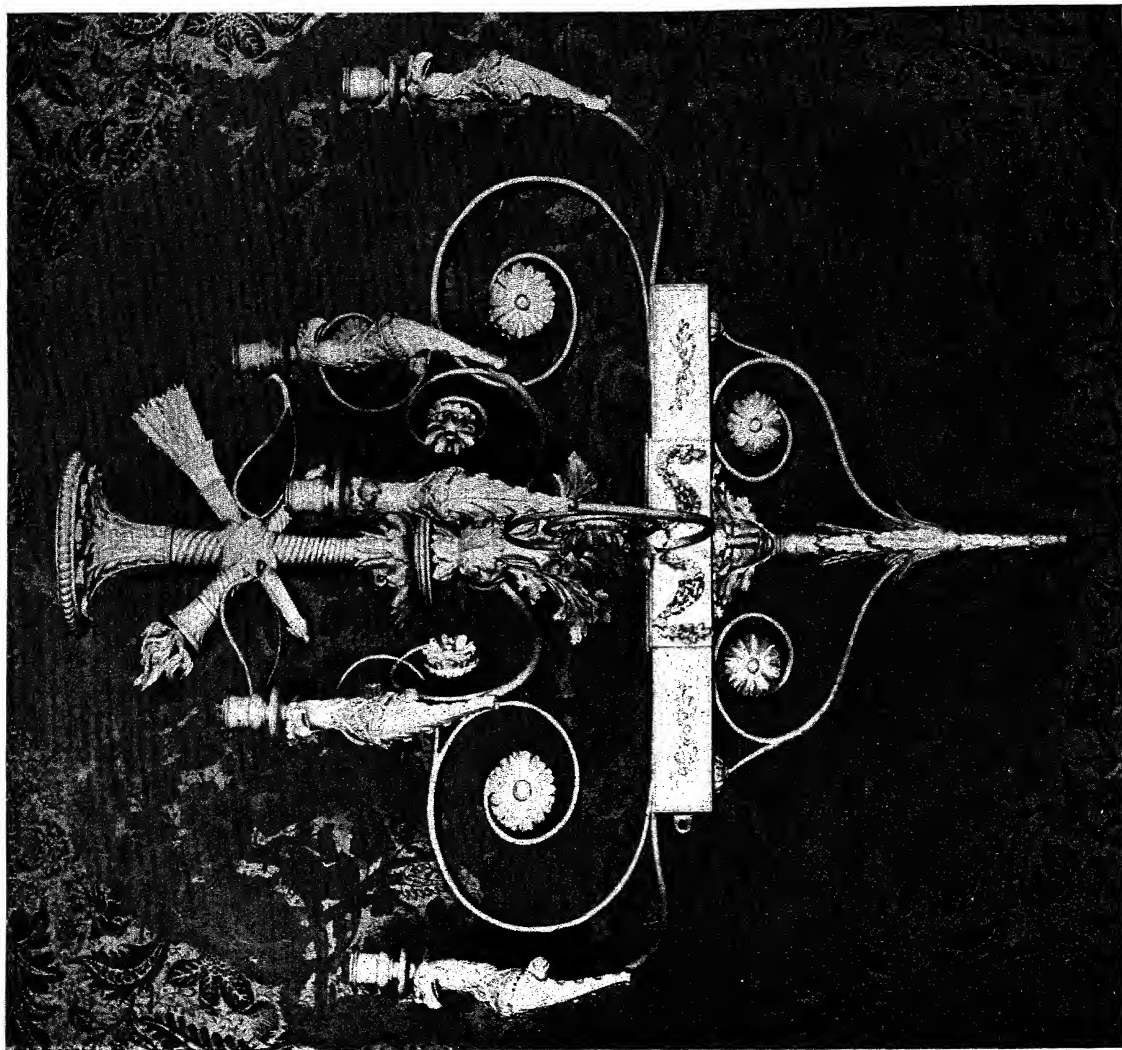


FIG. 221.—PAINTED WALL-LIGHT.  
Property of CHARLES TUTWAY, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

The sofas, covered with silk, were probably open back settees with upholstered seats, which were a very fashionable form of couch. The backs of these at times were very elaborate. Fig. 222 is from a set that is accompanied by chairs of similar design, their form being introduced at each end of the settee; the centre is occupied by a large oval, enclosed in the gilt reed and ribbon that forms the carved framing of the back and is painted in coloured flowers, and a classical figure subject on green and buff ground; small painted medallions also decorate the other splats.

To so great a degree of fineness were these long settees carried, that their practical stability would almost seem impossible. In fig. 223, one of those made to accompany the chairs and tables introduced by Sheraton, the central arcade of the back is so delicate that it is difficult to under-

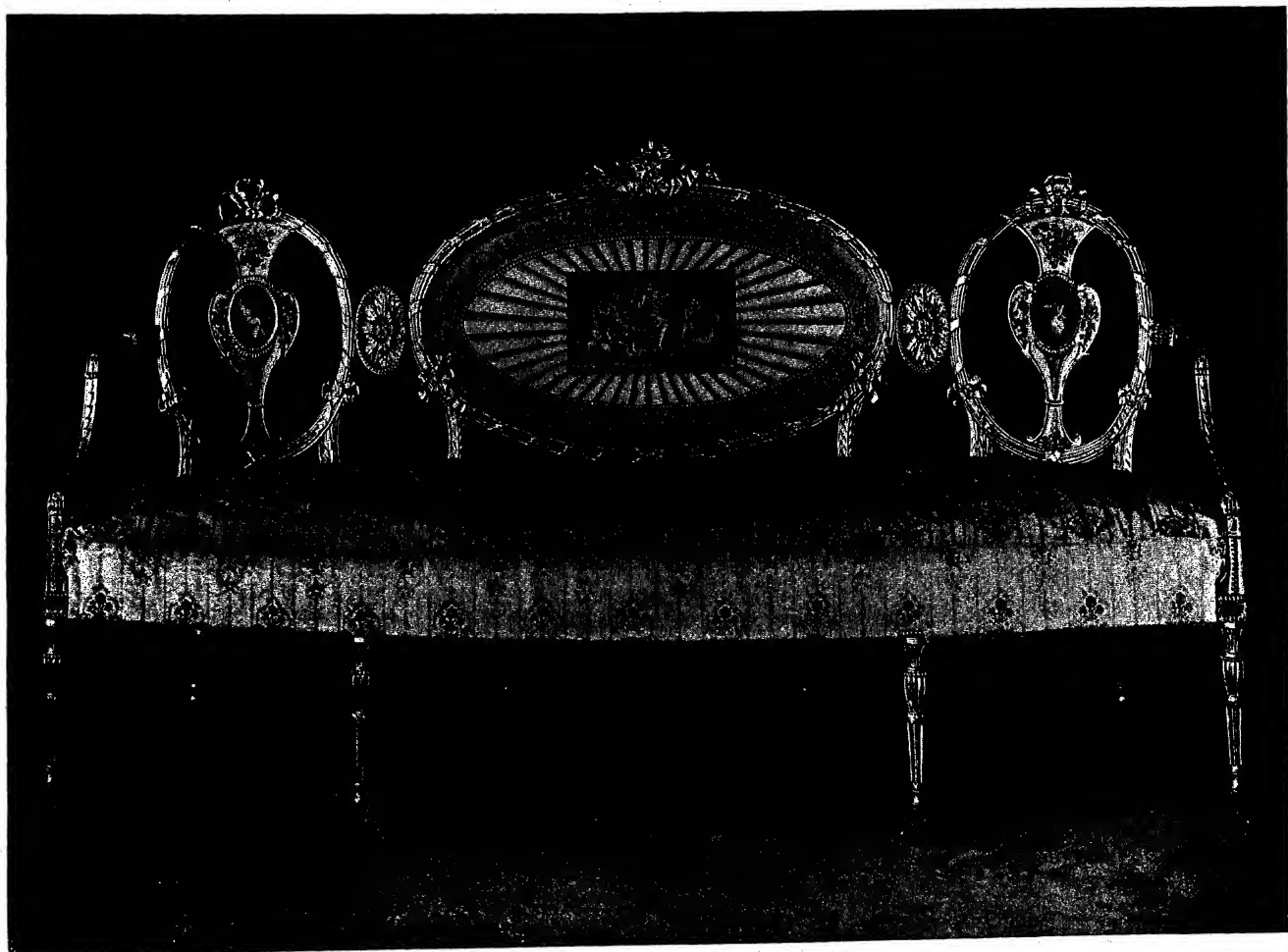


FIG. 222.—GILT AND PAINTED SETTEE. Length, 7 feet; width, 2 feet 6 inches.  
Property of W. H. LEVER, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

stand how it can withstand the weight of more than one occupant; but not a rail or a column has cracked, and every piece of the seat is in perfect condition. A series of cushions probably distributed the pressure, and the broad caned seat was covered by a squab cushion, in depth almost touching the lower rail of the back. Seats in this style, of shorter length, were more general, and with the type of Hepplewhite already given, are representative of these seats at the end of the century. A very great lapse in taste is perceptible between fig. 224 and the last specimen, yet only separated by a period of about fifteen years. A totally different spirit pervades every line of its construction, for the style known as Empire is but an adaptation of classical motives without any of their original and natural charm. The curves are clumsy, and even where the unsatisfactory-looking legs are made perpendicular, as in the long rosewood sofa (fig. 225) from the music-room at Harewood, the effect is not much better. Fig. 226 is another seat from the same set, which is only a clumsy

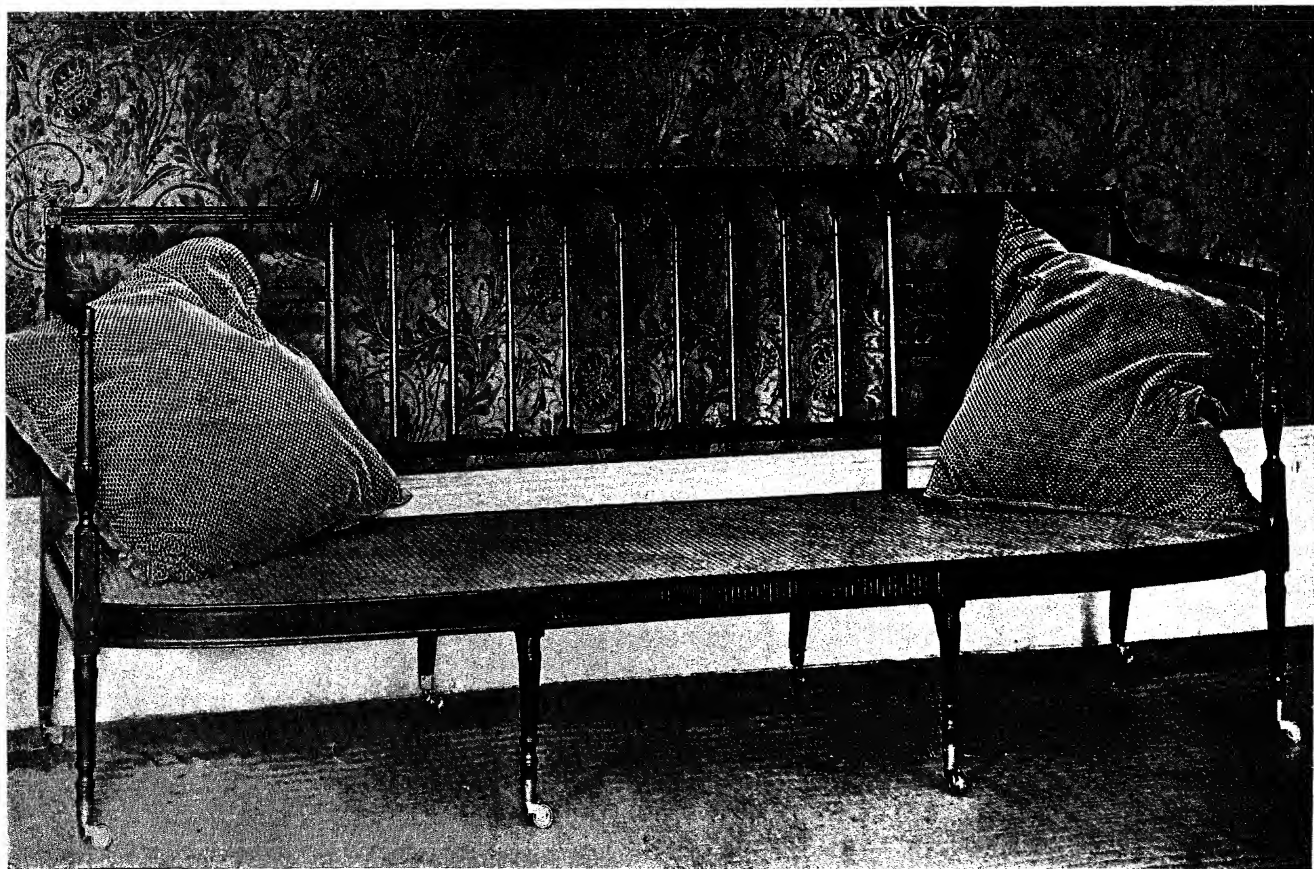


FIG. 223.—MAHOGANY SETTEE. Length, 9 feet; width, 3 feet 4 inches.



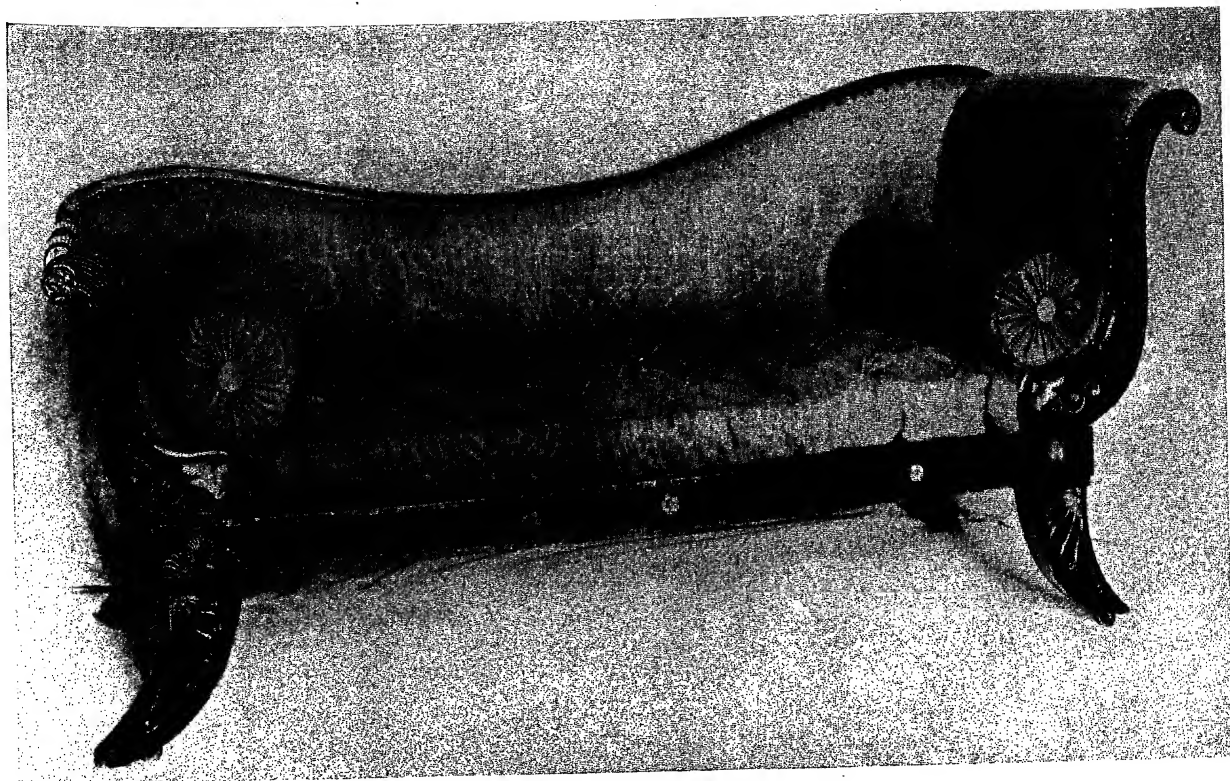


FIG. 224.—ROSEWOOD SOFA. Length, 7 feet.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

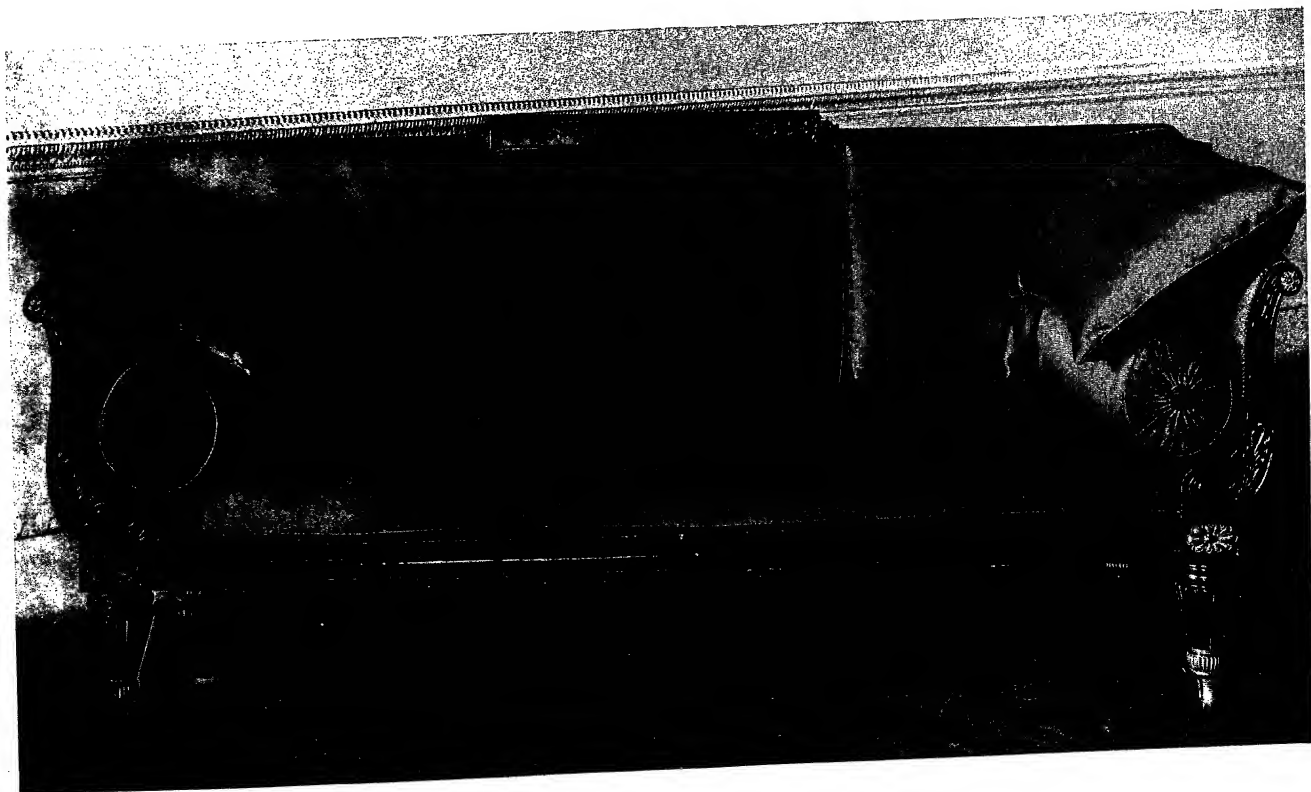


FIG. 225.—ROSEWOOD SOFA. Length, 7 feet 6 inches; height, 3 feet.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

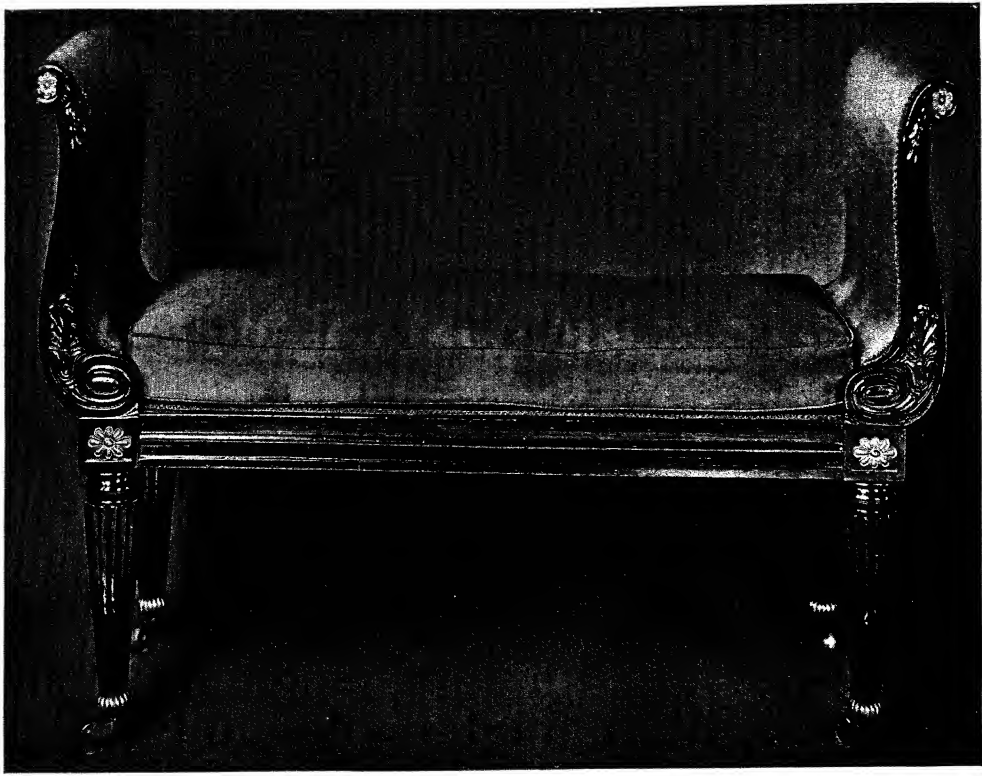


FIG. 226.—ROSEWOOD MUSIC-SEAT. Length, 4 feet 6 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

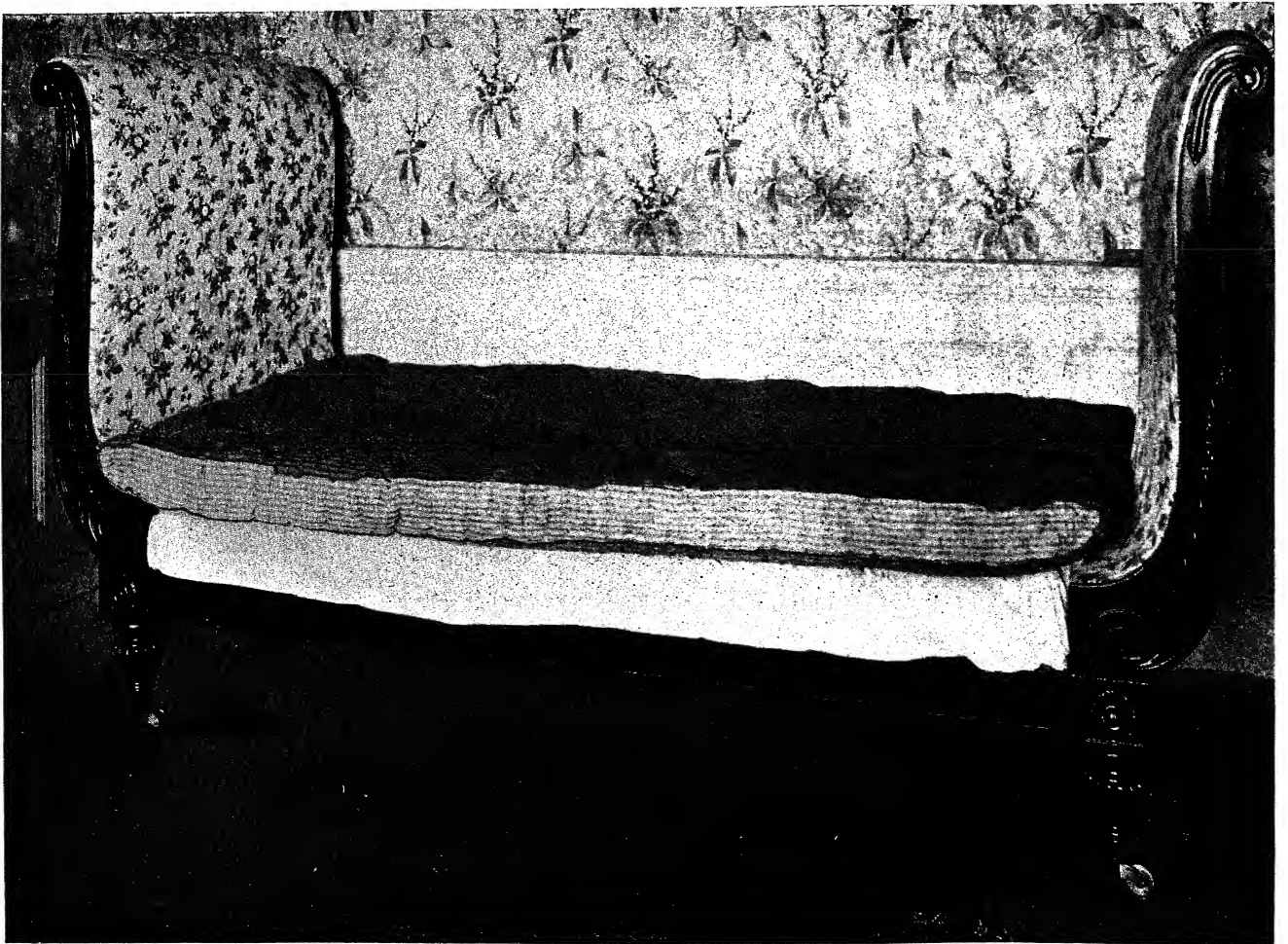


FIG. 227.—MAHOGANY BED. Length, 7 feet. Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



PLATE XV (AGE OF SATINWOOD)

PAINTED COMMODE

HEIGHT, 3 FEET 6 INCHES

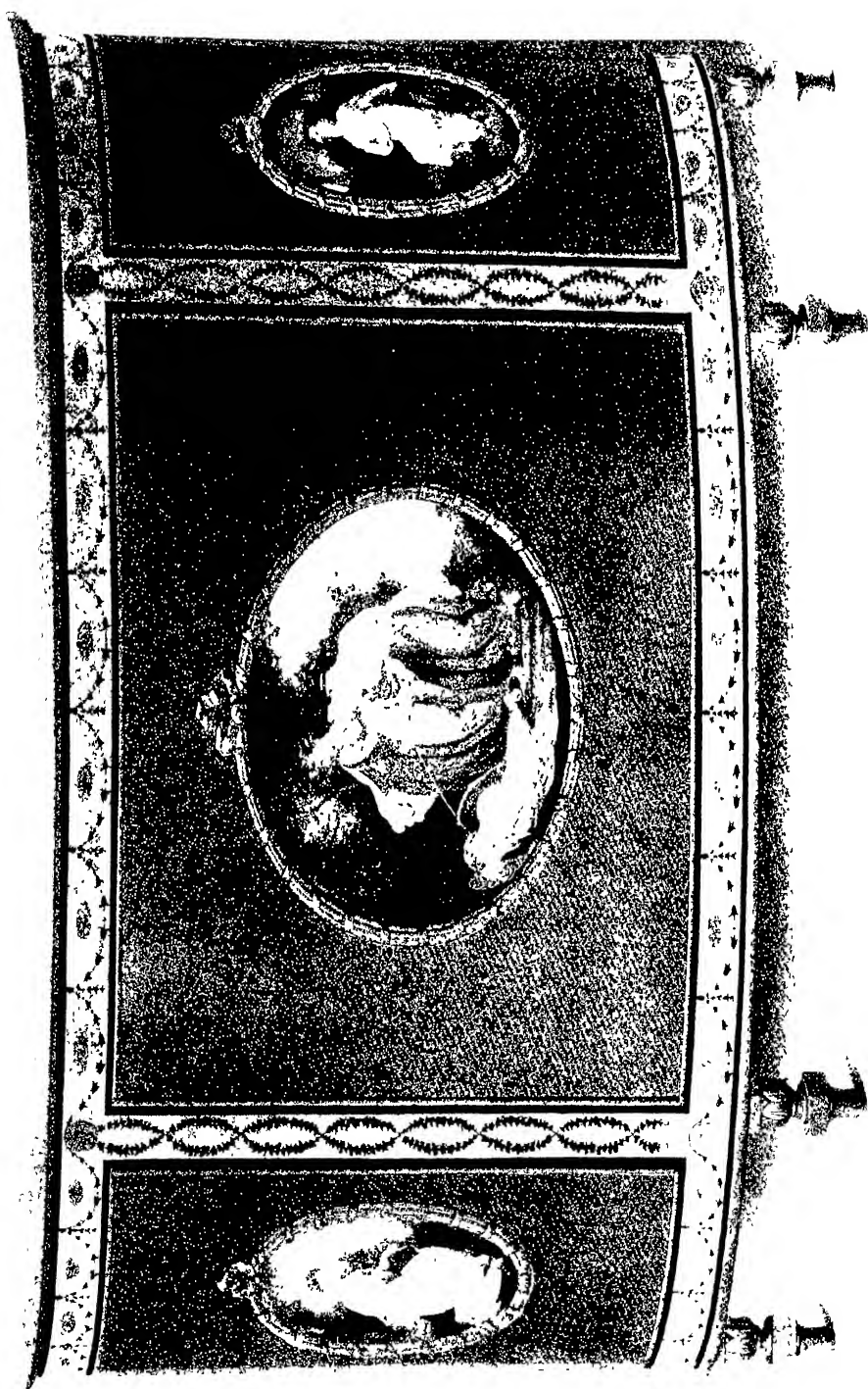
WIDTH, 3 " 7 "

DEPTH, 1 FOOT 7 $\frac{1}{4}$  "

PROPERTY OF

W. H. LEVER, Esq.







# ENGLISH FURNITURE

evolution of the charming window seats and settees designed by Adam, with a thickness and solidity that is quite unnecessary. The monotonous scroll, that formed the principal feature in furniture after 1820, was even introduced on beds, and very little difference is observable between the bed (fig. 227) and the sofas of the time; and it is somewhat of a relief to turn from this cumbrous ugliness of the times of George iv. to the pretty bird-cage (fig. 228) made towards the close of the previous century, and the charmingly decorated commode, of about 1800, given on Plate xv.

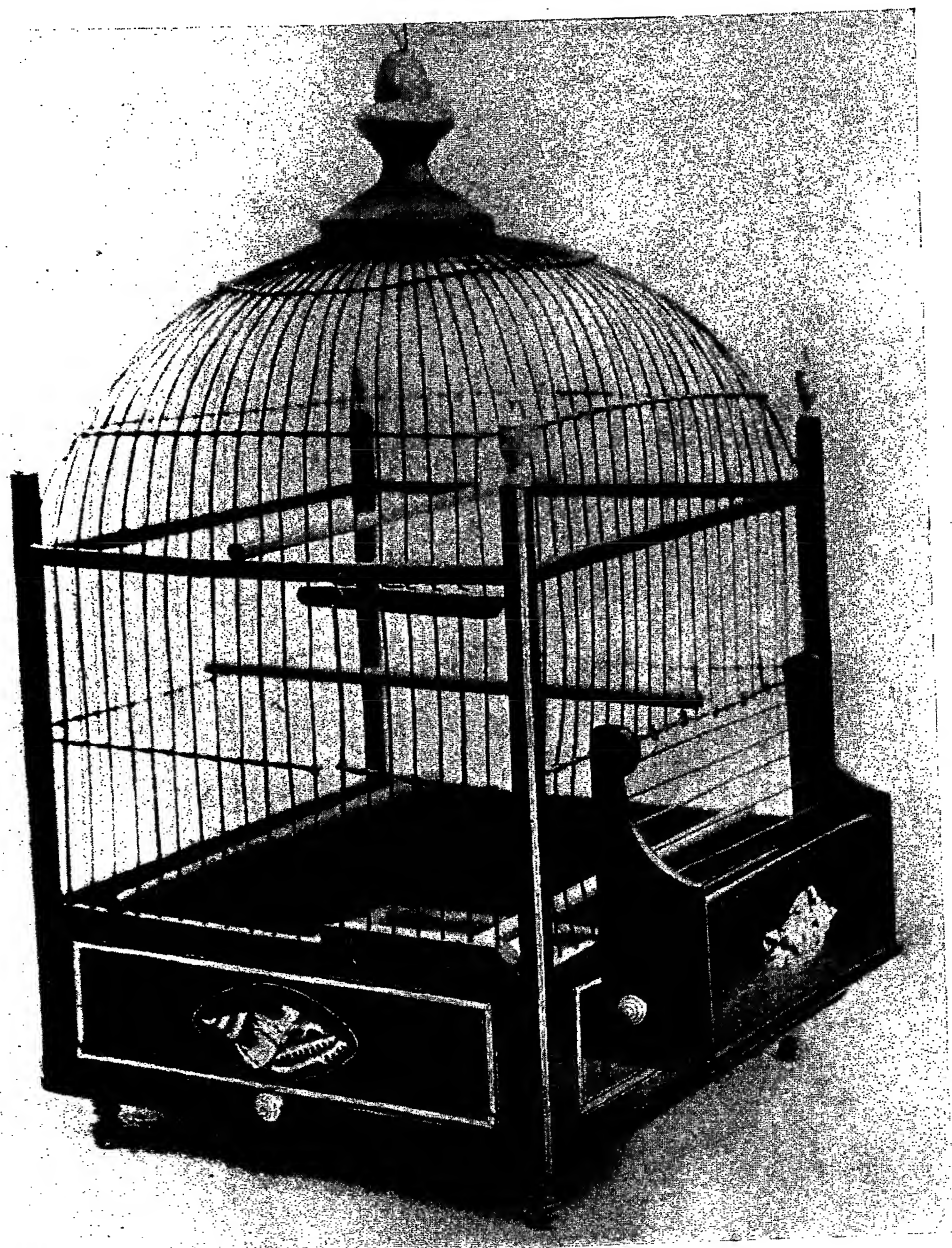
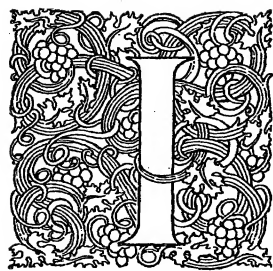


FIG. 228.—MAHOGANY INLAID BIRD-CAGE.  
Property of C. EASTWICK FIELD, Esq.

## CHAPTER VIII



It has been shown that, under the influence of Sheraton, chairs reached their limitations in delicacy of appearance. The most careful selection of wood and perfection of joinery was necessary to make these spidery constructions practical and permanent; where satin-wood was employed, the hardness of the material was an advantage, but the appearance of a satin-wood chair, unless painted, is never very satisfactory, and the majority of these very light examples were generally japanned in colour on mahogany or beech, for the waste entailed in chair-making precluded the general adoption of satin-wood for this purpose. To look really well, this wood, when used in small pieces, requires to be very highly figured, and its value for veneer prevents it from being cut out in the solid: genuine satin-wood chairs of the end of the eighteenth century are therefore rare, and before purchase should be most carefully inspected; a good many were made about thirty or forty years ago with other satin-wood furniture, and even this ageing has considerably added to the difficulty of detection.

Fig. 229 is one of a set made for Harewood about 1790, and probably formed part of the state bedroom furniture, which was all of satin-wood. The design is extremely simple, the splat being formed of three slender ribs carved with leafage, and the taper legs headed with small oval cabochons; the back rail is quite straight, and stretchers are of necessity introduced. The colour of the chair is a deep yellow, the satin-wood having darkened very much in tone. The maker was probably Chippendale and Haig, as this firm was upholsterer to the



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

Lascelles family, but the design is of Sheraton origin. The same master influenced the shape of the cherry-wood chairs (figs. 230 and 231). The first example was originally painted; the wheel patterned treatment of the back, first introduced by Adam and Hepplewhite, was quickly appropriated by other and rather later designers. Fig. 231 shows the reintroduction of caning which took place after 1780, and is a very good specimen of this work on the curve. In fig. 232 crossed diagonals take the place of perpendicular ribs, and the centre of the splat is filled in with caning headed with panels painted in grisaille; the legs and uprights being painted in colours on the satin-wood. The surface in fig. c, Plate XIII., is entirely painted black, and on this coloured floral designs are added. These chairs are also of the school of Sheraton, and shortly before the close of the century. Sometimes the whole of the splat was formed of crossed diagonal lines contained between two slender perpendiculars, as in fig. 233; the legs and uprights being round and delicately fluted in the French *directoire* taste, and the panel of the cresting lightly carved in place of painting. A little later these lattice-worked splats were placed horizontally, the top rail being of baluster shape, slightly scrolling over and united to the splat by a flat entablature, which was at first painted but later ornamented with applied brass ornaments. The seats were caned as in fig. 234, and a loose squab was generally added. The arm-chair, with mutilated feet (fig. 235), which belongs to this set from Houghton, is of rather different design, but covered with the same Spitalfields silk, which was especially woven for the purpose. The woodwork of both is of white and gold, and the set, with their silk coverings, was presented to the Earl of Orford by George IV. when Prince Regent, early in the nineteenth century.

It is necessary to allude to the eccentricities that characterised the later designs of Sheraton, where in seeking for originality he lost all sense of tradition and propriety, and where griffins, eagles, lions' paws, and cornucopia in combination with tortuous curves, replaced the simple, quiet,

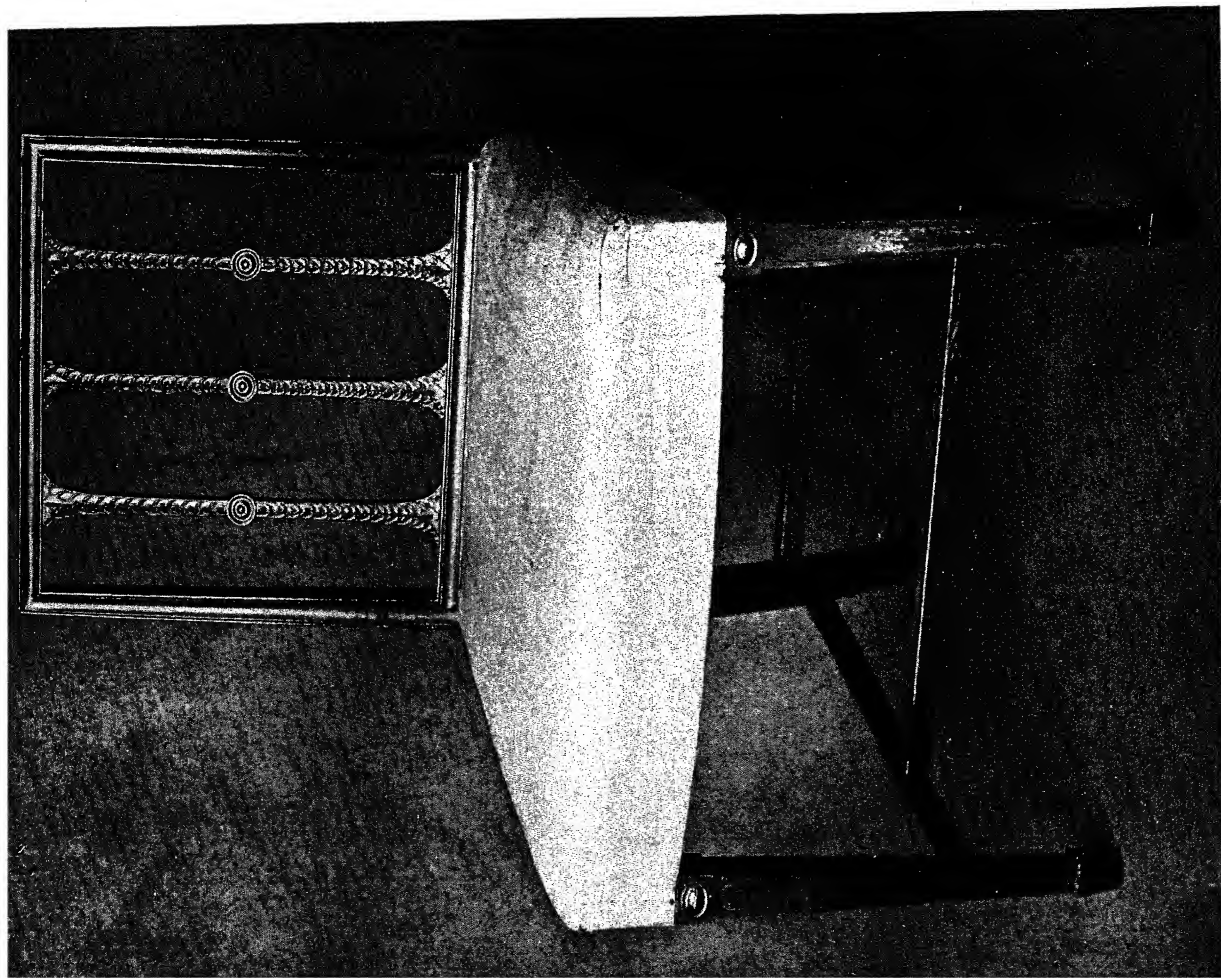


FIG. 229.—SATIN-WOOD CHAIR.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

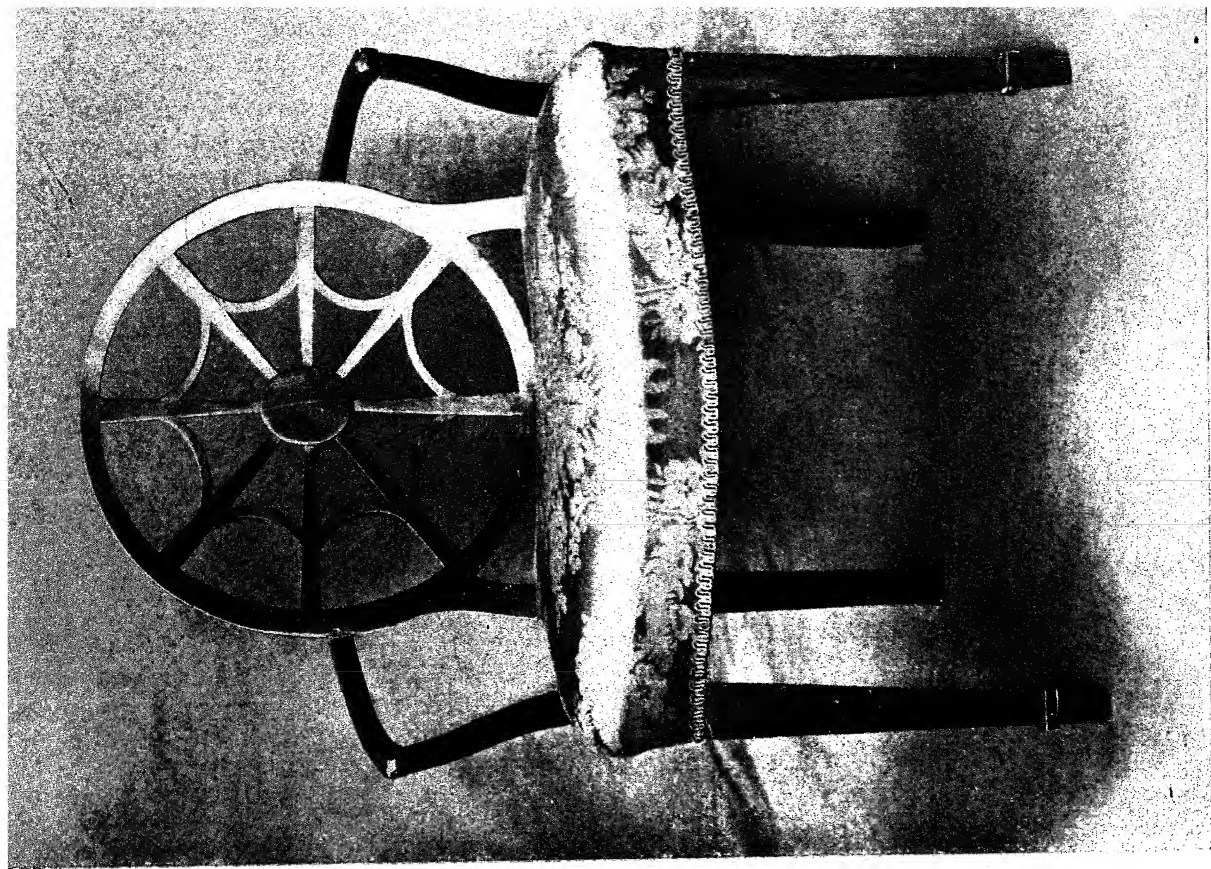


FIG. 230.—SATIN-WOOD CHAIR.  
Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

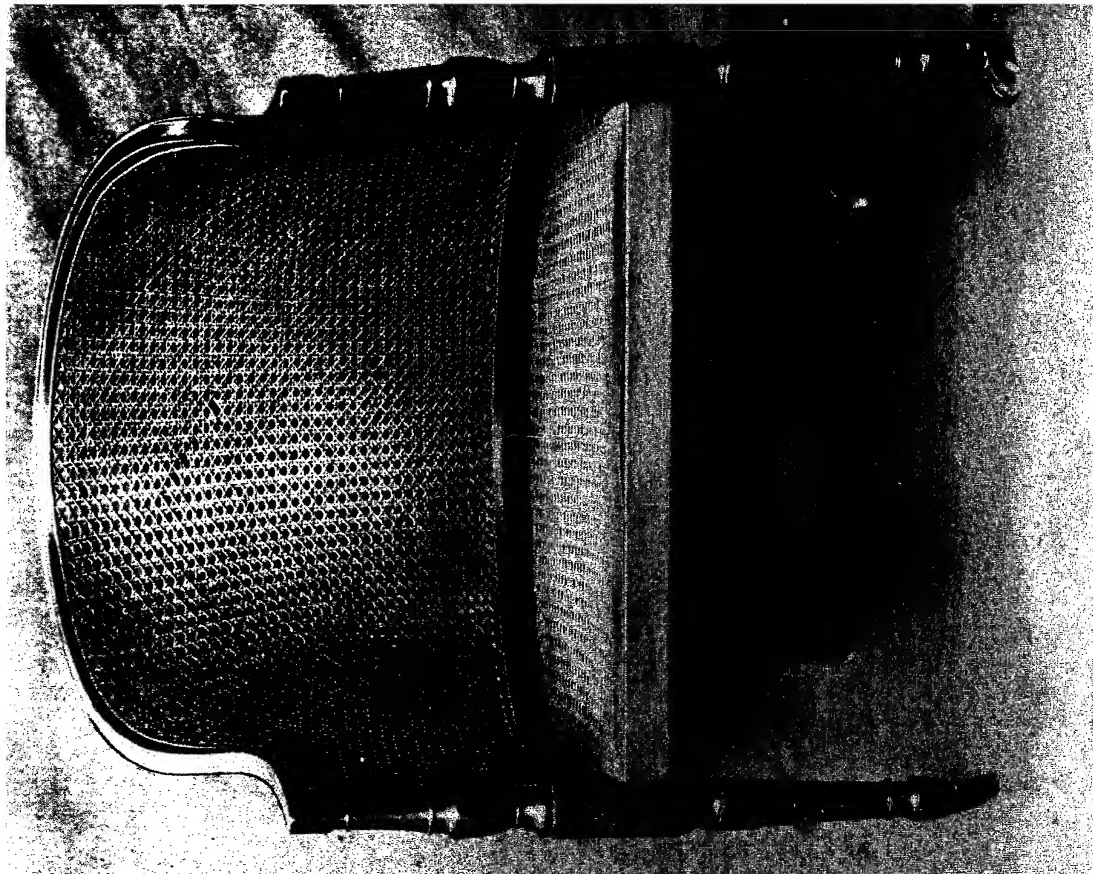


FIG. 231.—CANE AND SATIN-WOOD ARM-CHAIR.  
Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

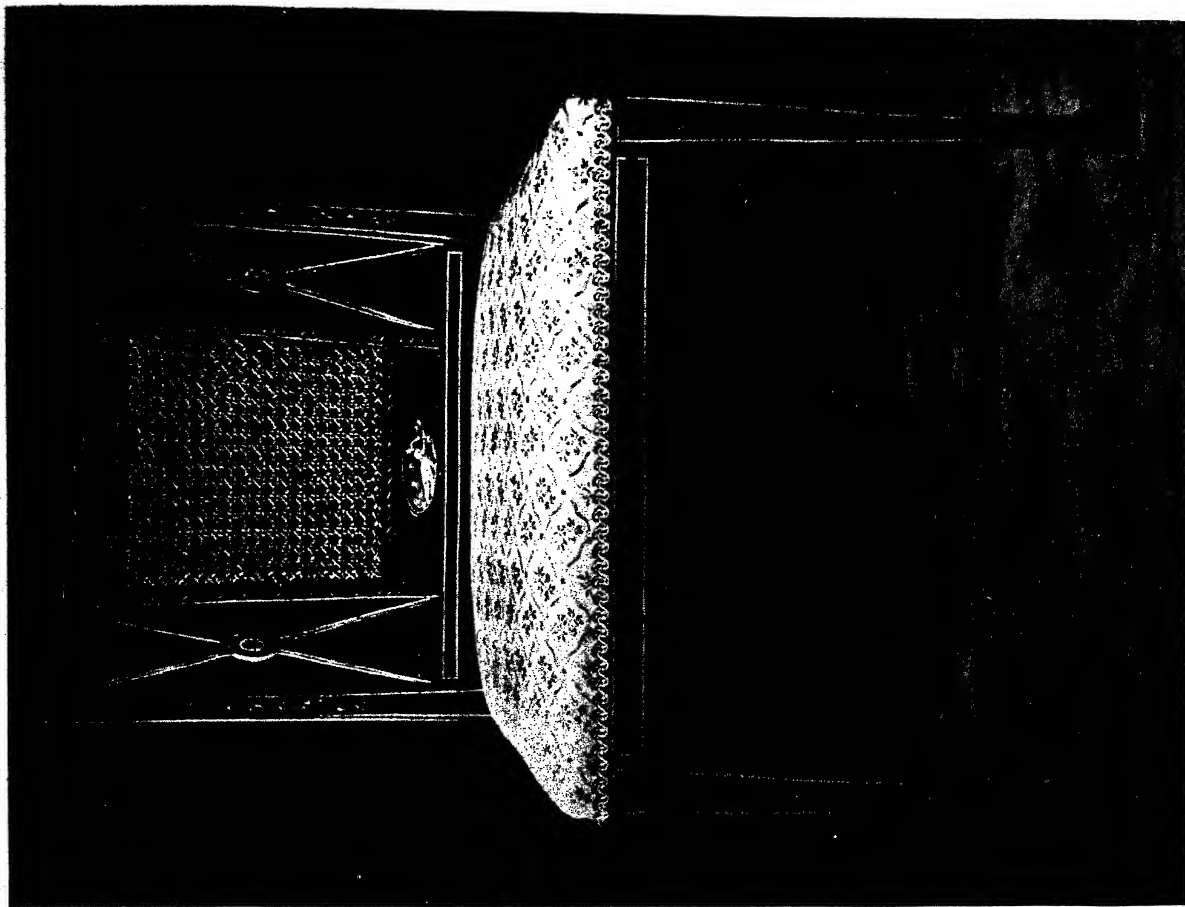


FIG. 232.—PAINTED SATIN-WOOD CHAIR.  
Height, 2 feet 10 inches; width, 1 foot 5 inches.  
Property of Miss SCHOLFIELD.



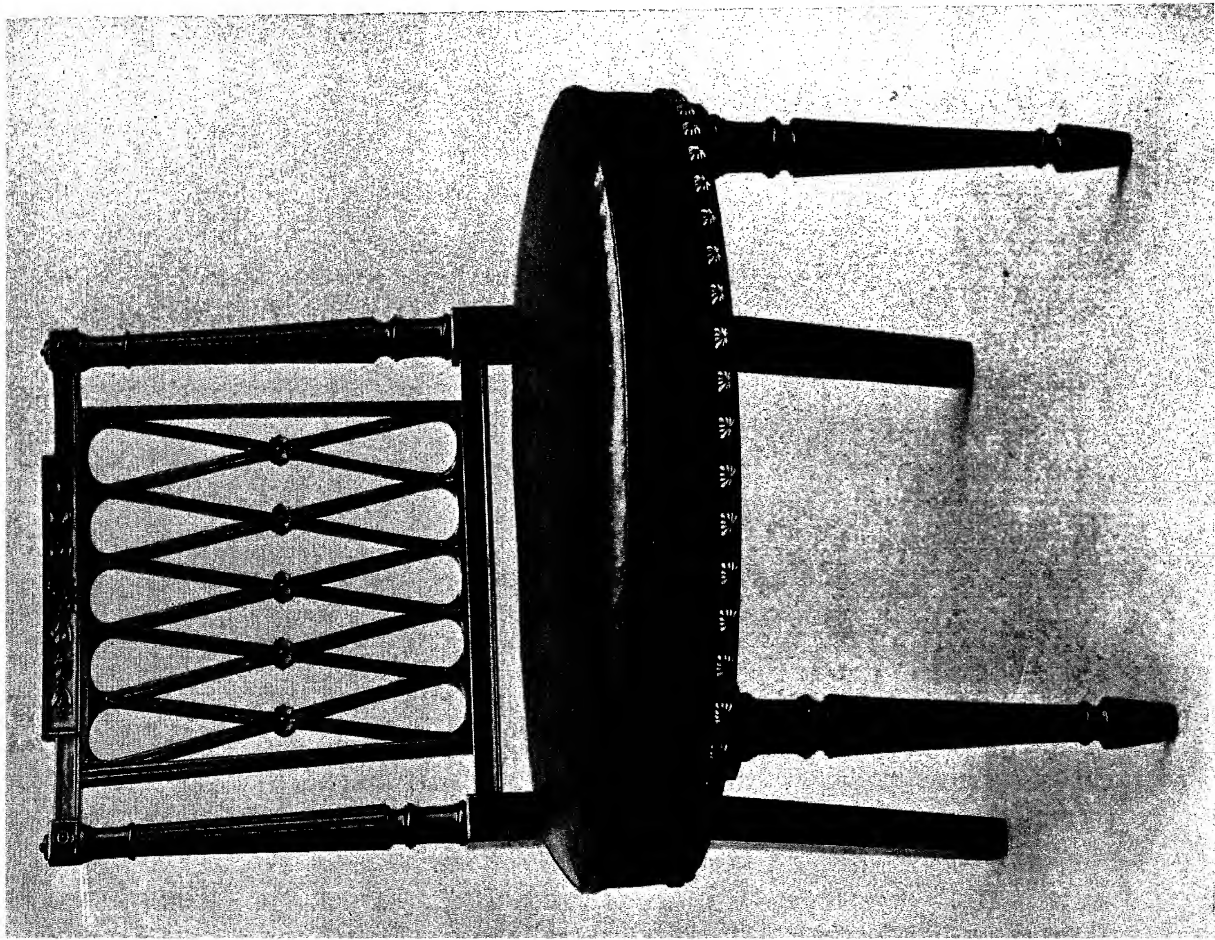


FIG. 233.—MAHOGANY CHAIR.  
Property of JAMES W. PIRIE, Esq.

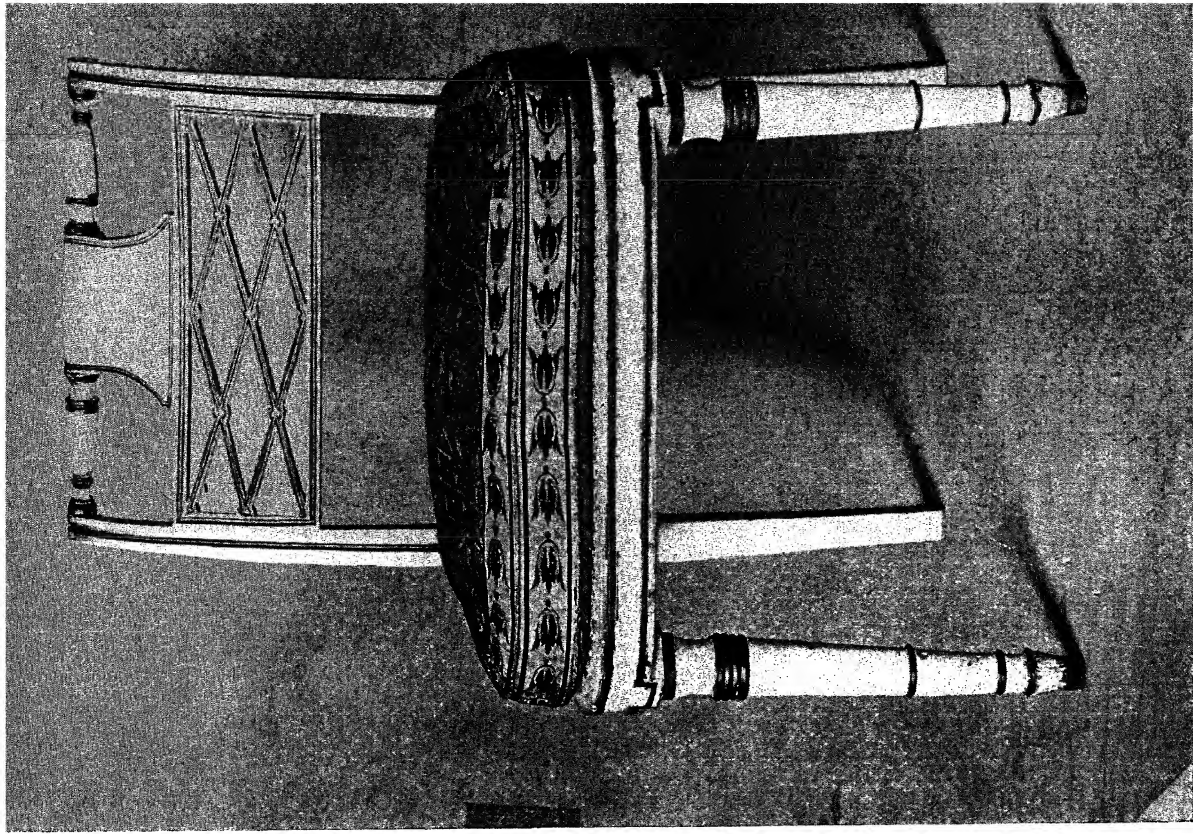


FIG. 234.—WHITE AND GOLD CHAIR,  
COVERED IN SPITALFIELDS SILK.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

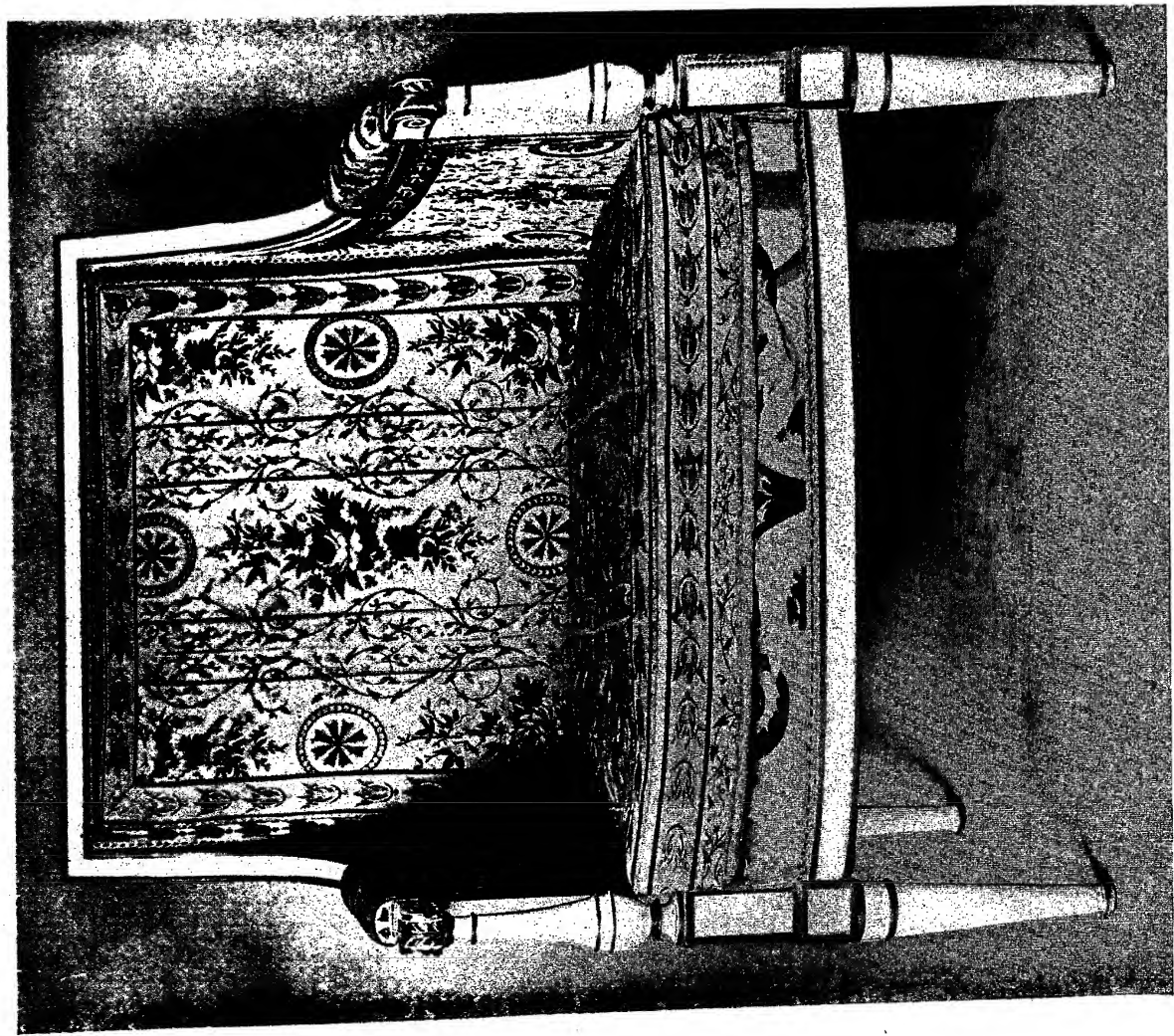


FIG. 235.—WHITE AND GOLD ARM-CHAIR,  
COVERED IN SPITALFIELDS SILK.  
Height, 3 feet ; width, 2 feet 1 inch.  
Property of the MARQUESS OF CHOLMONDELEY.

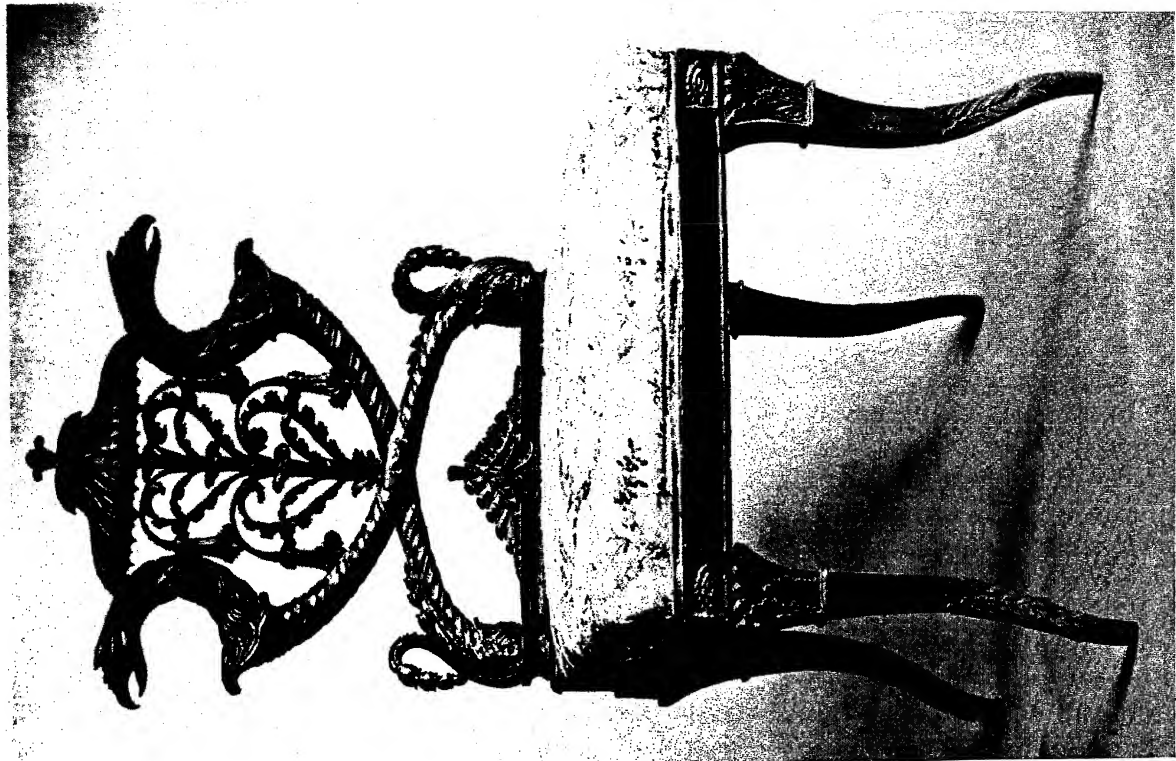


FIG. 236.—PAINTED CHAIR.  
Property of H. FRANKLIN, Esq.



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and perfect lines of his earlier style. These fantastic motives, confined principally to designs for sofas, tables, and chairs, were probably the effect of a mind worn out by the disappointment of losing influence on a public that was rapidly becoming meretricious in taste and insensible to simple beauty. In the chair, fig. 236, one of a set of six, even the legs are tortured, and fail to give the impression of supports. The back is composed of crossed cornucopia, from which spring almost at right angles griffins' necks and heads, holding between them an umbrella-shaped



FIG. 237.—X SEAT. Height, 2 feet 6 inches; width, 2 feet 6 inches.

Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

canopy, with a foliated stem of trumpet flowers in false Chinese taste ; the surface is painted in buff, red, green, and blue, and although beautifully carved, is too eccentric. This example, although possessing certain points of resemblance to Empire furniture, in no way represents it, but the seat (fig. 237) of about 1805 is very typical of this ultra-classical affectation. It is of X form, with lion terminals of strong classical mannerism ; in



FIG. 238.—MAHOGANY X CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 2 inches ; width, 2 feet.  
Property of W. JAMES, Esq.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

some instances these were brass, but here are gilt and carved, the rest is japanned black. Another and rather later example of this style made in mahogany can be seen in fig. 238; here the shape more approximates early chairs of the sixteenth century, suggesting that the end of all evolutions is but a repetition of the beginning, for the movement in true furniture began in the classical taste and ended under

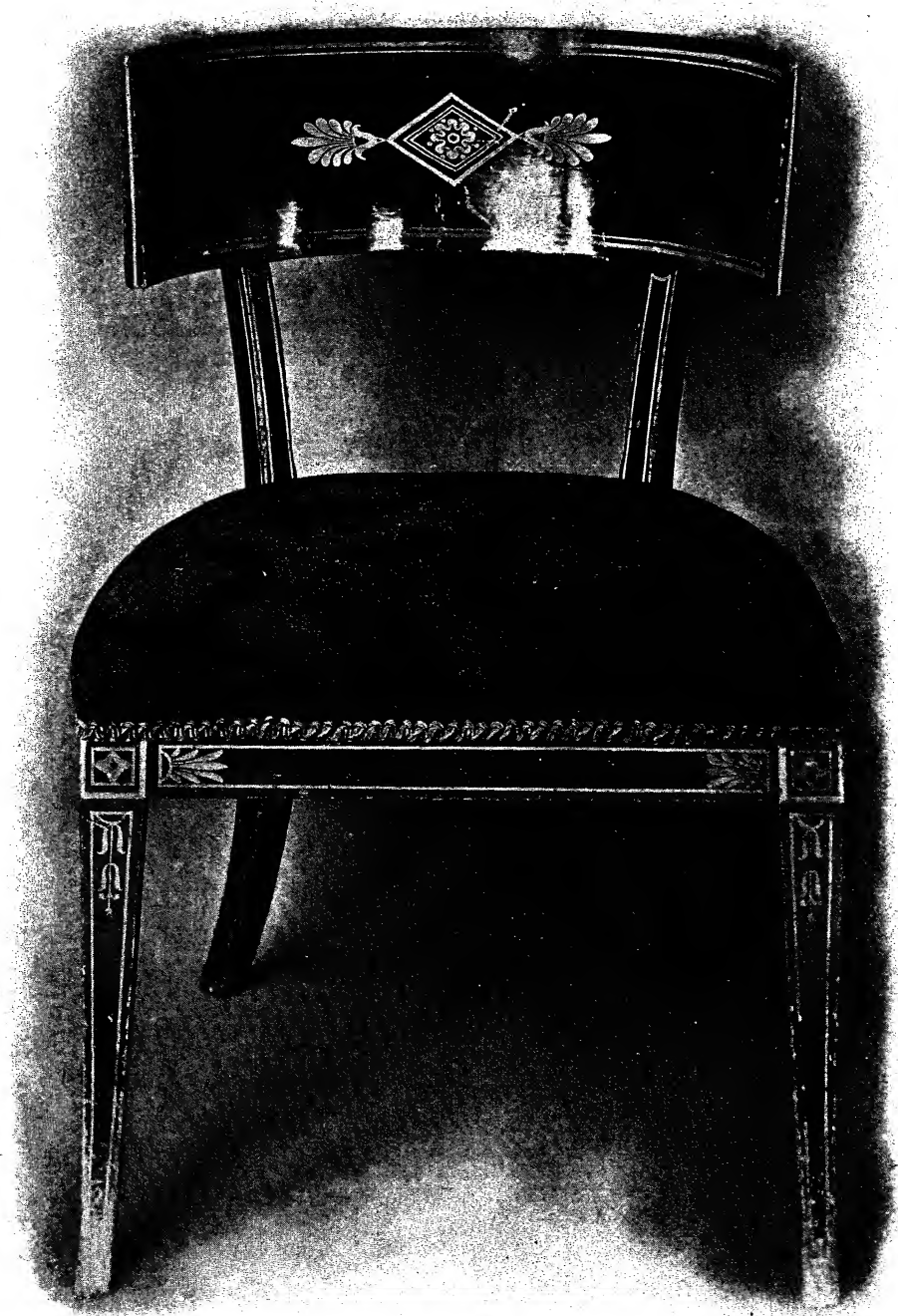


FIG. 239.—PAINTED CHAIR. Height, 2 feet 8 inches; width, 1 foot 9 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

the same inspiration, and nothing artistically original was produced after 1820. Fig. 239 is another classical shape much adopted for chairs without arms; the back is made of a flat piece bent round to form a semicircle; the taper legs curve backwards and forwards as in Greek and Roman chairs, and the surface is black, painted in buff and red with a few classical details; sometimes this shape was made in mahogany inlaid with similar patterns in ebony, often supported on dolphins, as in fig. 240,

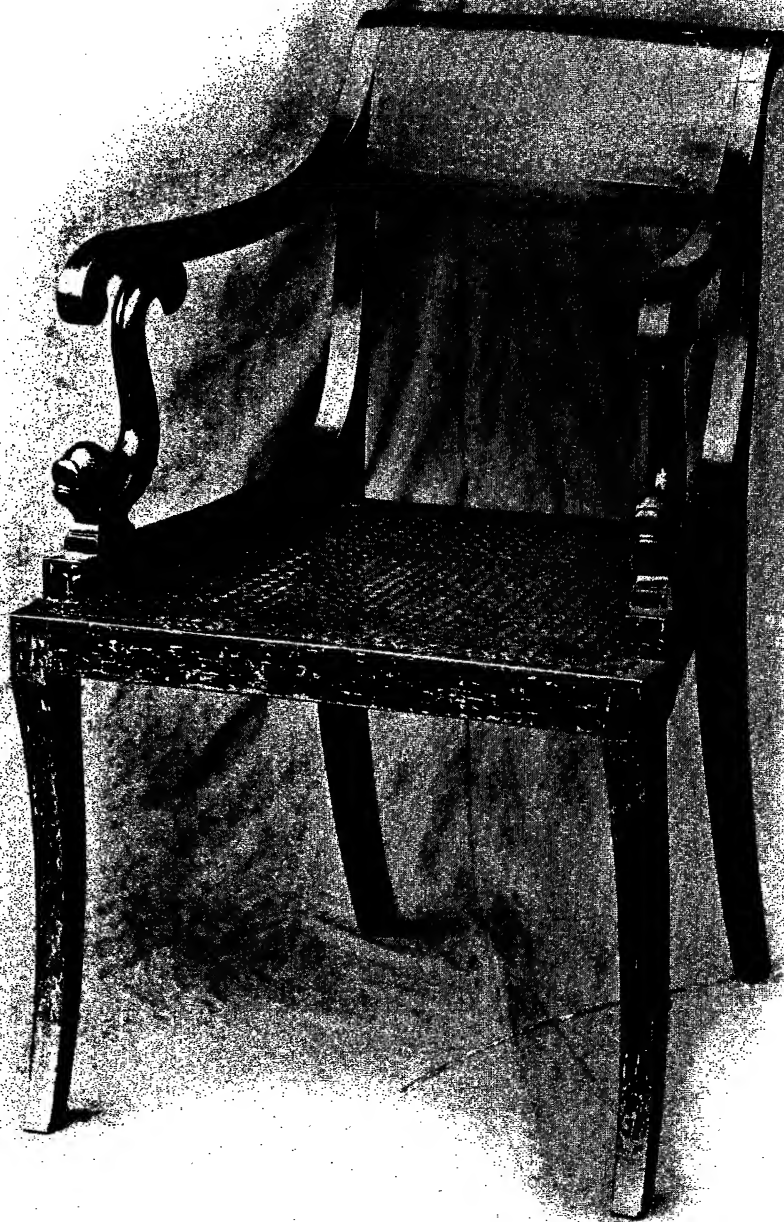


FIG. 240.—PAINTED CHAIR. Property of LORD ST. OSWALD.

# ENGLISH FURNITURE

and sometimes end in eagle or griffin heads, the seats being of cane, with the back rail broad and flat ; in this instance the back rail has lost the painted decoration.

Fig. 241 is one from a set of fourteen, the broad, flat heading being of caning, with the top rail scrolled over and painted in gold and brown like the rest of the woodwork ; the arm-supports rest upon lions' paws, which seem misplaced in this portion of the chair, and the legs show signs of the ugliness that was so soon to become universal. The chief interest in these chairs lies in the scroll over the back, a distinguishing and disagreeable feature adopted after 1820, for this clumsy detail, and the meaningless application of stamped brass ornament, was then as indicative of decadence and want of imagination as the tin hearts and hinges on the strange-looking boxes with railings that are called 'nouveau art' furniture in these times. To trace this decadence still further requires but little perception—the gap in taste between the chair, fig. 234 and fig. 242, separated by an interval of less than twenty years, shows so great a difference from all tradition of what was beautiful, that the mystery of this sudden change cannot be explained. The brass lines on the rosewood chair (fig. 242) are better than the coarse brass pateræ of this metal on fig. 243, and the curved classical legs more graceful than the thick rosewood and fluted horrors of later Guelphian times, but they are both without interest and imagination, belonging to a period of furniture that can only be described as commodious and commercial, made in that material age when the 'First Gentleman in Europe' was King of England.

With the close of the eighteenth century, originality and real beauty in English furniture ceased. Technically the work remained excellent, but as imagination and enthusiasm gradually disappeared, beautiful invention in domestic objects decayed and died ; architecture, the parent of furniture, after the death of George III. in 1820, became for the first time in England utterly ugly and uninteresting, textiles, plate, jewellery, as

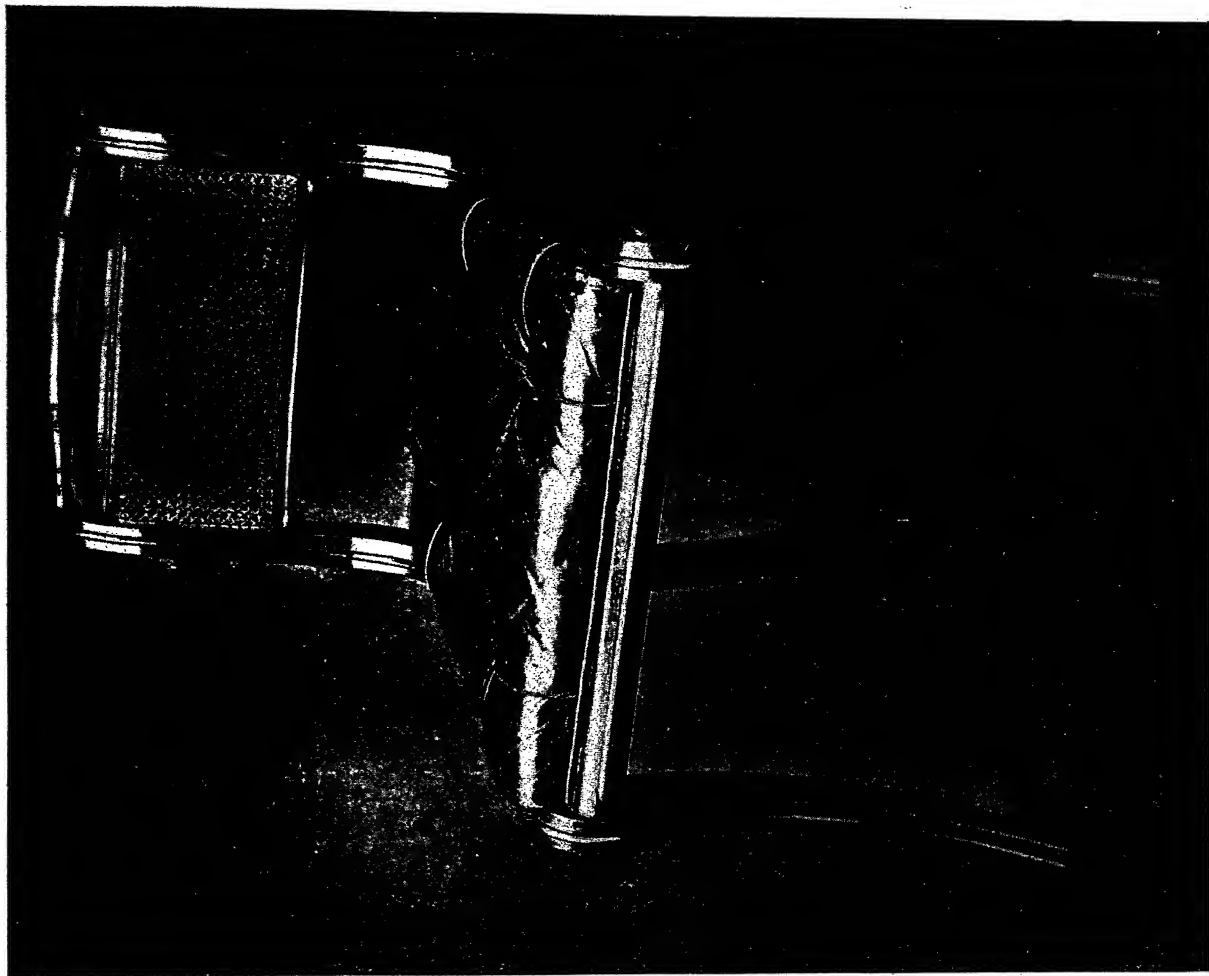


FIG. 242.—ROSEWOOD CHAIR.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.

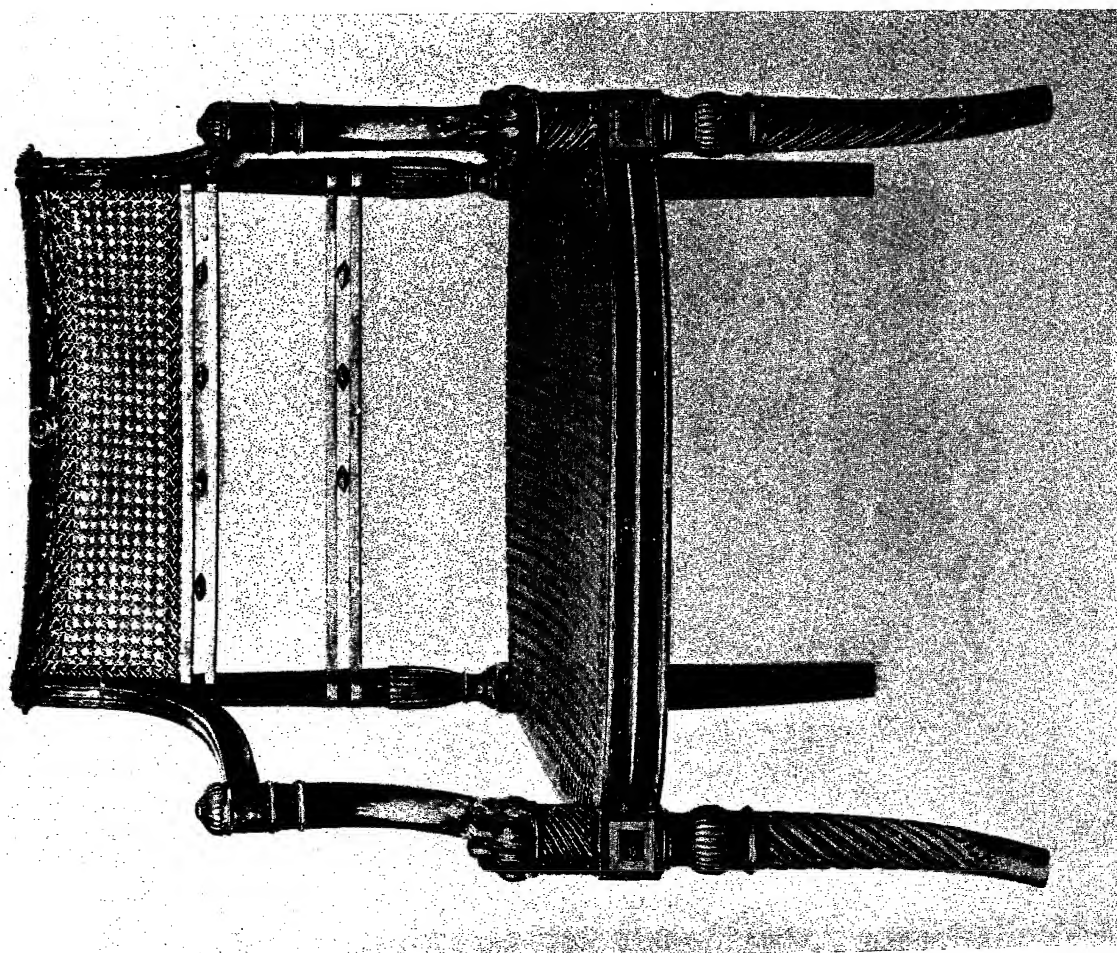


FIG. 241.—GILT AND BROWN CANED CHAIR.  
Height, 2 feet 8 inches. Property of MISS TYNDALL.



# ENGLISH FURNITURE

well as the necessary accompaniments of everyday life, were but imitations of former periods, and invention was concentrated on science, finance, and commercial enterprise in manufacture, little interest being taken in individual craftsmanship. Furniture no longer helped to carry out the decoration of houses, but became as ugly and uninteresting as its heavy

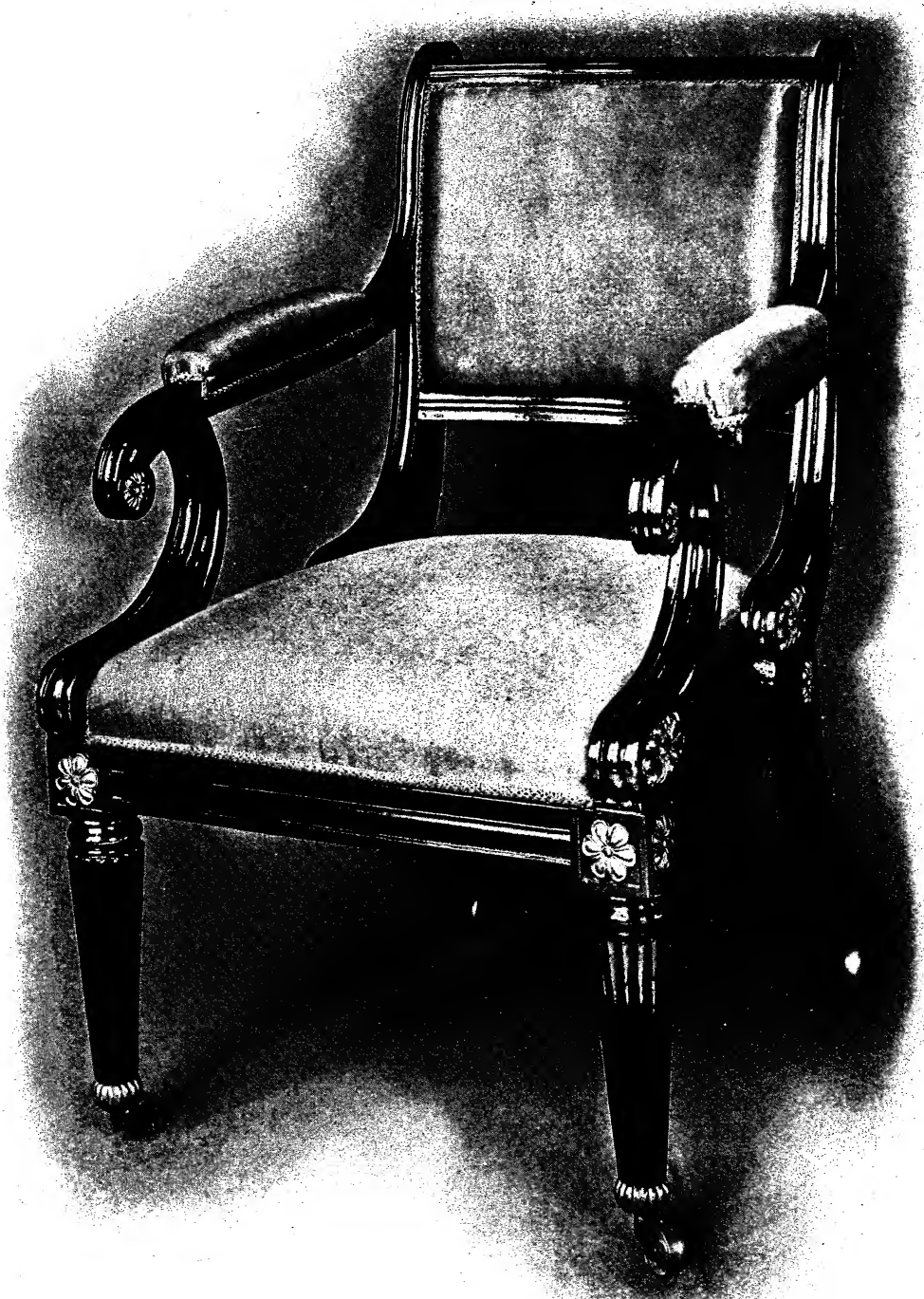


FIG. 243.—ROSEWOOD ARM-CHAIR. Height, 3 feet 2 inches; width, 2 feet 2 inches.  
Property of the EARL OF HAREWOOD.



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and prosaic surroundings, for in some unexplained manner the long romance of beauty that had lasted in this country for eight centuries ceased suddenly, and was followed by a period, of forty years' duration, of the most appalling taste. Happily throughout this period, in many instances, the enthusiastic artist and collector survived, and in spite of being regarded as harmlessly eccentric during the dark age of early Victorian taste, they preserved, and were eventually the means of encouraging, the revival of the beautiful.

It is remarkable that so much furniture of the Age of Oak has survived to the present time, but its indestructible qualities have doubtless preserved it, though owing to its cumbrous construction, it was for a long time esteemed of little use and relegated to servants' quarters. In the Middle Ages all furniture was highly valued and scarce, a scarcity not altogether due to want of money, but induced by an out-of-door life that called for few luxuries. Even the most wealthy possessed but little furniture till the sixteenth century, when peaceful times were more conducive to domestic comfort. The individual requirements of woman, in spite of her indoor seclusion, apparently received little encouragement or attention from man, unless especially adding to her personal appearance, and it is not till about 1540 that we find furniture set apart exclusively for woman's use. Patronage of artistic skill was therefore chiefly concentrated upon architecture, armour, weapons, plate, jewellery, and textiles. The treatment of early furniture resembled its stone surroundings, and was more or less comfortless in construction. About 1580 these architectural features began to be blended with new practical possibilities; such things already existing as small tables, long stools, settles, chairs, writing-desks, court-cupboards, and buffets were added to early in the seventeenth century by luxurious upholstery, which took the place of loose cushions and draperies that had hitherto been the only means of giving colour and comfort to furniture. Cushions on the floor were gradually superseded by sets of chairs and

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small, comfortable settees, and the improvement proceeded rapidly until the time of the Rebellion, when for twenty years, artistic civilisation was arrested. With the restoration of the Monarchy, comfortable arm-chairs, with tall padded or cane backs, and with a sensible rake to the arms and back, were invented ; also high-backed settees with padded arms, that quickly developed into the sofa of the end of the century ; isolated specimens of day-beds and couches of the period of James I. are in existence at Hardwick and Knole, but all sense of line and proportion is lacking in the examples of this period, and quite eighty years elapsed before such furniture became elegant or really decorative. In the same way the cumbrous posts and cornices to beds and the carved wooden headings were replaced by much taller and more spacious constructions entirely covered with silk or velvet. All the upholstered furniture made during the last twenty-five years of the seventeenth century was invested with true decorative sentiment ; it was vigorous and original, practical in construction, and never artificial ; full of colour in the happy combination of upholstery and marqueterie, or with just sufficient carving to emphasise its lines. The furniture of Charles II., William and Anne, may not be so suitable to the requirements of modern houses as the dainty and more delicate productions of the eighteenth century, but the largeness of style of the former period has pictorial qualities that always infer the work of the artist over and above the mere constructive cabinet-maker.

The fashion for gilding furniture had been sparingly adopted up till the end of the seventeenth century, but soon after that date it would be difficult to name any important article of furniture that was not to be found entirely gilt. In important houses like Blenheim, Houghton, and Chatsworth, the furniture in the state-rooms was entirely gilt, even Chippendale a little later provided suites of gilt furniture for his clients, and the fashion for this gilding was continued by Adam through the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. Introduced for the sake of

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originality and ostentation, it was doubtless the means of bringing in new fantastic motives on the furniture.

Chippendale's rococo period was followed by his inlaid and painted satin-wood, and this representation of gold colour was the culmination of the desire for brightness ; but even Chippendale loses in dignity when he touches this satin-wood style, so distinctly feminine in refinement, yet possessing a fascinating prettiness and brightness of its own that appeals to many, and for this reason and the excellence of its construction, will probably always remain popular. It is, in fact, the last original effort in our furniture, completing with great finish a long history of artistic taste, closely associated with our personality, and superior in straightforward simplicity and fascinating reticence to the furniture of other countries.

Foreign ideas and instruction no doubt at times greatly influenced our craftsmen, but such ideas and details were filtered through English minds, and during this process acquired the indescribable but distinct human interest found in all branches of our Art in which nothing is more nationally representative than English Furniture.



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